

Qatar: No gas to Israel until after peace

DOHA (AFP) — Qatar, which has raised the possibility of piping gas to Israel, will not supply any until the Middle East peace process is completed, the country's leader said Friday. Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani told the official news agency QNA that the project, first raised last year, was still under discussion but would not be finalised yet. "We don't have any objection to Qatar's gas going to Israel after the current peace process is accomplished," said Sheikh Hamad. Doha announced on July 29 that it would become the first Gulf Arab state to open an official representation in the Palestinian self-rule areas, but has so far said it would be premature to do the same with Israel. Israeli officials visited Qatar for the first time in June 1994 to attend a session of Middle East multilateral talks on weapons non-proliferation. However, Doha has repeatedly stressed the need for progress in the peace process between Israel and Lebanon and Syria. Doha said last year it would be ready to sell liquefied natural gas to Israel through a pipeline, if the two normalised ties and if the project was profitable.

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Russian envoy arrives in Syria

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Victor Possovayuk arrived here Friday for talks with Syrian leaders, the official news agency SANA said. Mr. Possovayuk underlined "Syria's important role in the Middle East peace process," and said his two-day visit was particularly aimed at improving bilateral relations, the agency said. The Russian envoy last visited Damascus in July, when he held talks with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa on the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Qatar ready to stop appeal over Bahrain dispute

MUSCAT (AFP) — Qatar said Friday it was prepared to withdraw an appeal to the International Court of Justice over a 50-year-old border dispute with Bahrain if Saudi Arabia succeeds in mediating in the row. "Qatar is still ready to withdraw its recourse to the court if the mediation led by Saudi Arabia reaches an acceptable solution," said Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is due to meet at the end of December in Muscat to discuss border disputes between its members.

1 dead, 14 injured in Fort Bragg attack

WASHINGTON (R) — A gunman opened fire on Friday at an air force base at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, killing one person and injuring 14, a base official said. "Fifteen soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division were shot at approximately 6:30 a.m. here today while conducting physical training," said base spokesman Tim Donahue. "One soldier is confirmed dead and 14 have been admitted to Fort Bragg's Womack army medical centre." It was not known how serious the injuries were. A soldier was arrested and taken into custody. The names of the suspect and the victims have been yet been made public.

Italy to host EU summit in June

ROME (AFP) — Italy will host a summit of the European Union's (EU) 15 heads of state and government in June 1996, Italian Prime Minister Lamberto Dini announced on Friday. Following a Rome meeting of the EU Council of Ministers, Mr. Dini announced the June 22-23 summit and other key EU meetings to be held during his country's six-month tour of duty at the head of the European policy-making body, including an informal get-together of foreign ministers in Palermo on March 9-10.

All flights to Kabul airport suspended

KABUL (AFP) — All flights into Kabul were temporarily suspended on Friday as another barrage of rockets rained down near the capital's airport, a security officer said. He said planes were being re-routed to a military airport in perimeter. 50 kilometres north of the capital. The four rockets landed harmlessly on a hill outside the airport perimeter, the officer said. There were no casualties. At least five rockets were fired at the airport on Wednesday and 10 on Tuesday.

Assali passes away

AMMAN (Petra) — Prominent historian Kamel Jamil Al Assali, author of many books and publications on Jerusalem, Palestine and Islamic History among many other subjects, passed away in Amman on Friday. The deceased, who taught history at various educational institutions, the last of which was at the University of Jordan, was laid to rest in Amman.

MENA seeks to build private-public sector partnership — King HM, accepting Prince Asturias prize, reaffirms commitment to democracy, political pluralism and human rights

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

THE MIDDLE EAST and North Africa (MENA) economic summit, which opens in Amman tomorrow, will devote itself to granting the private sector the freedom to operate freely since such freedom is vital to achieving sustainable economic growth, His Majesty King Hussein said Friday.

The King, addressing a gathering at Asturias, Spain, where he accepted the prestigious Prince of Asturias Concord Prize was awarded to him in recognition of his efforts for peace in the Middle East.

Addressing the gathering, the King emphasised that "the bedrock of stability and genuine security lies in economic prosperity, and the closing of the gap between the wealthy and the less fortunate."

"It is here that Europe must play a role, for now is the hour of Europe," said the King. "I do not speak of North against South, but rather of partners that share in the legacy of the right and the wrong."

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EU troika defies Israeli call, visits Orient House

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A European Union (EU) delegation met senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials at the organization's de facto headquarters in East Jerusalem on Friday to the fury of Israeli leaders.

The European troika delegation, representing the countries holding the immediate past, present and future presidency of the EU, met the PLO minister of Jerusalem, Faisal Hussein, at the Orient House.

Before the visit, the delegation, led by Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana, met a furious Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Tel Aviv earlier Friday. Israel has banned the Palestinians from any political activity in Jerusalem.

"The only address to meet

members of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) is in the self-rule territories. That is what is stipulated in the accord between us and the Palestinians," Mr. Rabin told them, according to his spokeswoman Aliza Goren.

The troika, which began a tour of the Middle East on Thursday, arriving in Cairo and Beirut, met PLO leader Yasser Arafat in Gaza City before visiting the Orient House. They signed a deal for a European Investment Bank loan of 300 million dollars to cover badly needed infrastructure work in the Palestinian territories.

Israel captured and "annexed" the Arab eastern sector of Jerusalem in 1967, but has not received international recognition for its declaration that the Holy City is its undivided and eternal capital.

It periodically tries to persuade visiting diplomats not to go to the Orient House with varying degrees of success.

Asked earlier in the day by reporters about the troika's plans to visit the PLO headquarters on Friday, Mr. Peres said: "I'm not particularly happy about it."

During the meeting, Mr. Peres told Mr. Solana, according to a foreign ministry statement: "The European position is asking for trouble and is particularly bizarre in the light of the massive majority by which the U.S. Senate adopted the decision to move the U.S. embassy in Israel to Jerusalem."

Mr. Peres was referring to

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Israel considers PLO bid to speed up Jenin withdrawal

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Friday he was considering a request by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to speed up a troop pullback from Jenin, the first West Bank town to be turned over to the Palestinians under the new Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy agreement.

Mr. Peres said Mr. Arafat made the request in a telephone call Thursday evening. "Clearly the chairman would like to see it speeded up, but we have to consider the orderly redeployment," Mr. Peres told reporters. "We shall try to do whatever we can to meet the two desires."

Asked by reporters in

Gaza City about the beginning of the redeployment, Mr. Arafat said Friday that "there is no accurate, honest implementation" to the autonomy agreement, and that he hoped the situation would be corrected.

Redevelopment began in Jenin earlier this week when Israel moved out of a police station and five senior Palestinian officers arrived to coordinate with Israel the arrival of 1,000 police by mid-November. On Sunday, another 18 to 20 armed Palestinian officers were to be deployed in Jenin.

Mr. Arafat asked Mr. Peres in their telephone conversation to allow an additional 150 Palestinian policemen to enter Jenin by Sunday.

Mr. Peres said he had not responded yet. Colonel Ribhi Arafat, Palestinian commander of the West Bank liaison office with Israel, said Israel was hesitant for fear there would be overlapping authorities.

"The Israelis told us that they have fears that their might be frictions if many Palestinians in uniforms and weapons wander in the city while Israeli soldiers are still there," said Mr. Arafat, who is not related to the PLO Chairman.

Mr. Arafat, stopped by reporters as he left Friday, would only say: "Handing Jenin to the Palestinians did not start yet."

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Most Palestinians favour some form of union with Jordan

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — More than two-thirds of Palestinians are in favour of some sort of future union between their territories and Jordan, an opinion poll published Friday showed.

The poll, carried out by two research institutes in Nablus and Jordan, showed that 74 per cent of those questioned were in favour of some kind of union. 22 per cent were against and four per cent expressed no opinion.

Among those in favour of a union, 60 per cent want a confederation of two separate states, seven per cent a federation within one common state, while 25 per cent would like the territories to

be simply integrated into Jordan. Eight out of 10 of those questioned believe Jordanians and Palestinians have special links, according to the results of the poll.

Part of the survey was carried out in mid-October among a representative sample of 1,144 people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Centre for Palestinian Research and Studies in Nablus.

The Strategic Studies Institute of Jordan University carried out the other part of the research, questioning 1,600 people, including 400 Palestinian refugees.

The researchers said there was a three per cent margin of error.

The study, released on Friday by the Centre for Strategic Studies at the Uni-

versity of Jordan, — and drawn from samples from Jordan, refugee camps, the West Bank and Gaza Strip — showed that 77 per cent of Palestinians in the West Bank and 77.5 per cent Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are in favour of unified constitutional links with Jordan.

While Palestinians interviewed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip favoured confederation with a percentage of 44.7 per cent in the West Bank and 53.7 per cent in the Gaza Strip, 51.8 per cent of Jordanians showed interest in restoring the pre-1967 status of the territories.

The highest percentage to favour this shape of unity, however, was refugee camp residents whose support was rated at 68.6 per cent.

"This is understandable," said Mustafa Hamamneh, the centre's director. "They want independence but they want some kind of links with Jordan too."

Regent reviews summit facilities

HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Friday inspected preparations for the three-day Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit, which opens here on Oct. 29, and was briefed on the final arrangements to receive participants and journalists who will be covering the event. Prince Hassan voiced satisfaction with the preparations and arrangements and praised the efforts made to ensure the success of the summit.

Prince Hassan met at the MENA summit press centre with Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Khaleel Al Karaki and issued directives on certain aspects relating to the opening session.

Window on 'globalism'

HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, has paid tribute to the Jordan Times on its 20th anniversary and wished the newspaper success in "spreading the message of globalism."

In a brief message, the Crown Prince's Press Office sent on his behalf to the editor of the Jordan Times on Thursday. His Royal Highness quoted from a 17th century French classical author, Duc de la Rochefoucauld: "Celui qui croit pouvoir se passer de tout le monde se trompe, mais celui qui croit qu'on ne peut se passer de lui se trompe d'avantage."

A translation of that quotation, which appeared as one of 500 epigrammatic reflections on universal human behaviour collected under a publication (in 1665) called

the Maximes, reads as follows: "Those who believe they can do without the world deceive themselves; but those who believe the world cannot do without them deceive themselves even more."

La Rochefoucauld was an aristocrat whose writings were generally cynical with self-interest seen by him as the source of all action. On a more positive note, he recognised honesty as the aspect of human nature that holds society together.

"In paying tribute to the 20th anniversary of the Jordan Times ... the Press Office, on behalf of His Royal Highness, wishes you all success in spreading the message of globalism," the message said.

Deputy Prime Minister and

(Continued on page 7)

Israel does not pin much hope on Christopher's visit to Syria

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Friday he did not expect stalled peace negotiations with Syria to be revived by the upcoming visit of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Damascus.

"For the time being it looks like nobody is in a hurry," Mr. Peres told reporters. "I regret it, because I think that we have to work very seriously for a comprehensive peace, but we cannot see any change in the Syrian position."

In spite of his pessimism, Mr. Peres said it was useful for Mr. Christopher to visit Syria, to see if anything had changed in the Syrian position. Mr. Christopher is scheduled to visit Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in Damascus on Monday.

"If something will be new, then the negotiations will be reopened," Mr. Peres said. "If not, we shall again return to the waiting line."

Syria broke off negotiations with the Israeli and Syrian army chiefs of staff earlier this year. It has refused to resume talks unless Israel drops its insistence on

retaining an early warning station on the Golan Heights as a condition for withdrawal.

Mr. Peres spoke after meeting a delegation from the European Union (EU) presidium, currently led by Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana. The delegation will also be visiting Syria, and Mr. Solana said he would convey the views of Mr. Peres and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to Mr. Assad.

Earlier, in a radio interview, Mr. Peres suggested Syria was reluctant to make peace with Israel because it would raise questions about the presence of Syrian forces in Lebanon.

"Assad is finding himself quite isolated. There is in his eyes a certain advantage to this isolation," Mr. Peres said. "As long as he is isolated he can hold onto Lebanon, with the Arab World saying nothing about this. If he embarks on the road to peace, it is likely to raise problems for him."

Mr. Rabin, at his meeting with the EU delegation on Friday, accused Syria of trying to stop other Arab countries from establishing relations with Israel, Israel

Radio said.

Mr. Peres and Mr. Rabin would meet Mr. Christopher in Amman during the Middle East and North Africa economic summit opening there on Sunday.

Mr. Peres said they would ask Mr. Christopher to press Syria over Damascus-based groups opposed to the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace accord whose militants have carried out suicide attacks against Israelis, and on guerrillas in Lebanon that Israel says Syria could curb.

Mr. Christopher will make the Damascus stopover of several hours of his way back from Amman.

A State Department source said the visit was aimed at "touching base with Assad" and that no breakthroughs were expected.

Mr. Christopher does not intend to visit Israel during the trip.

The secretary of state was able to add the Damascus visit because of the delay in Bosnian peace talks next week in the United States, which are now set for Wednesday, officials said.

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11th hour contacts continue on M.E. bank

By Nermeen Murad
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A day before the opening of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) summit, the fate of a regional bank and a parallel financial intermediary institution to be based in Amman hung in the balance as negotiations between Jordan and Egypt continued Friday, according to a Jordanian and other sources.

According to these sources, the two countries were still bogged down in negotiations over an impending announcement of the \$5 billion regional bank, to be based in Cairo, and another regional institution to be based in Amman.

The sources, who insisted on anonymity, told the Jordan Times that, Amman had lent its approval to the establishment of a regional bank in Cairo but not without conditions which Egypt has failed to accept so far.

According to these sources, Jordan is insisting that a Middle East North Africa Financial Intermediary Organisation (MENAFIO) be established in Amman.

While Cairo has accepted the concept, these sources say, it has also insisted that the proposed institution assume a "modest" posture and be later integrated into the operation of the regional bank when it is established in about two years.

The sources indicated that if Cairo continues to refuse to allow for the establishment of a "meaningful" parallel institution to the bank, Amman may no longer be interested in the establishment of the bank, a senior Arab source told the Jordan Times. "It is a package deal," the source said.

While Jordanian officials have refused to reveal whether Jordan has made its acceptance of the bank conditional on the Egyptian acceptance of the MENAFIO-style, one Jordanian source said that Jordan was insisting that the Amman-based institution be "an elaboration of the REDWIG (Regional Economic Development Working Group) multilateral secretariat to turn it into a viable institution with 'meaningful' presence and on equal footing with the bank."

Jordanians who feel that Cairo should not steal the show from Jordan, the second Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel, insist that "we want it (MENAFIO) to have teeth and meat," the source told the Jordan Times.

The Jordanians appeared to accept that MENAFIO would later merge into the regional bank but they were reluctant to elaborate on details at this time.

According to the Jordanian source, Washington has said that it would support the establishment of the economic regional institutions if the core countries of the Middle East peace partners reach consensus on them. These are Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinians and Israel.

The Europeans have said that they support the establishment of MENAFIO in Amman "on equal footing" with the regional bank.

According to the sources, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are set against participating in the establishment of a regional bank.

Gulf countries, which are represented in REDWIG multilateral secretariat, however, would be expected to become partners in the Amman-based institution.

Jordan, Israel, Egypt and the Palestinians have been meeting with some 40 other states since January to decide

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Experts call for speeded-up talks on Jerusalem's status

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Former U.S. ambassador to Israel, Samuel Lewis, said the longer it takes to start talks on the final status of Jerusalem the "harder the compromises are going to be," in light of demographic factors on the Israeli side, a reference to the Israeli annexation of Arab land and populating the city with an increasing number of Jews.

In a panel discussion entitled "A Unique City," sponsored by the Columbia School of Law at the Catholic University of America on Oct. 24, Mr. Lewis and two prominent law professors and jurists debated the "Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995," which the Senate and House passed by overwhelming majorities as they spoke.

Another panelist, Congressman Benjamin Gilman, chairman of the House International Relations Committee, arrived late because of the roll call vote.

Mr. Gilman, lauding the legislation during a reception following the panel discussion, allayed concerns that the peace process would be adversely affected as a result, and said, "we finally did what we should have done," emphasizing that Jerusalem "should be the capital of Israel."

Mr. Lewis, who served as ambassador to the Jewish state from 1977 to 1985, described the question of the embassy move as a "red herring" and "the least important issue" at present, mainly because it does "not solve the problem of Jerusalem." He maintained that the legislation was passed in light of what he described as "special interest politics."

But the retired diplomat said there is "growing dissidence" among Israelis, some of whom believe they should confront the issue of Jerusalem now, and others who believe Israel should "surrender assets," Mr. Lewis believes that among Palestinians, Yasser Arafat is playing the Jerusalem card because of its importance to his people and to underline the fact that Gaza has been less than what they expected.

He went on to stress that the Palestinian entity "has to have a relationship to Jerusalem" otherwise peaceful existence will be in peril.

Mr. Lewis said it was the United States which now brought the Jerusalem issue to the fore — "to the front pages."

Among the commentators also was Marshall Breger, a senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation and a visiting professor at the Catholic University of America who has held several high positions in the Department of Labour and was once President Reagan's liaison to the Jewish community.

Mr. Breger noted that the location of an embassy "does not mean we recognise the city where it is located as the capital," citing as examples East Berlin in the former East Germany, and Abuja, Nigeria. He added that in 1999, if the law is enforced, the U.S. embassy will be in West Jerusalem — "which is agreed upon in the American context as Israeli."

Mr. Breger outlined the U.S. stance regarding Jerusalem since 1967, saying it fluctuated between the position of the former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Arthur Goldberg, who shortly after the Six-Day War said the 1967 Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem "cannot be but interim," and former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Charles Yost who declared that East Jerusalem

is "occupied Arab territory." At any rate, successive U.S. administrations have held that the holy city should "remain unified," whereas American politicians have supported both unification and the embassy move.

Mr. Breger, who published several articles on the subject of Jerusalem, maintained that the president should keep in mind three factors in deciding on the move: access to holy places; whether the move would lead to a "more stable environment"; and specifically whether a Palestinian entity can "survive without a foothold in Jerusalem"; and what effect this law will have on the peace process.

The third discussant in the panel was UCLA political science professor Steven Spiegel who specialises in foreign policy in the Middle East and who served as a Middle East advisor to then-Governor Bill Clinton in 1992. Spiegel said it is the wrong time to bring the embassy issue to the fore-front and that "we ought to let the Israelis and Arabs make their decision" regarding Jerusalem.

Mr. Spiegel enumerated the benefits of the peace process to Israel, including an improved economy, its welcome status in Eastern Europe and countries like Japan and India, and its gaining compact and normalisation.

The issue of Jerusalem, he said, has great and serious problems, potentially, but it is not an issue we, "as Americans, should exacerbate." He opined that "we can facilitate the peace process such that Jerusalem will not be a deal breaker but a deal sealer." He reiterated that the parties "have to decide the future (on the city) because they are doing the talking."

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Saudi bomber killed himself, official says

DUBAI (Agencies) — A Saudi national suspected of bombing a crowded mosque committed suicide on Thursday after firing at policemen who surrounded his hideout, the Interior Ministry said.

Saudi Television, quoting an Interior Ministry statement, said a Saudi security man was killed inadvertently by friendly fire during the attack.

The statement said that after surrounding his hideout in the rugged mountainous area of Wadi Tours, the security forces called on the suspect, Abdullah Ben Mohammad Ben Sa'ad Al Amri, repeatedly to surrender.

Instead, "he opened fire at them from a rifle... which forced the forces to toss a gas bomb at him and to advance towards him."

"When he found that they are closing on him, he blew up himself with a bomb similar to that he previously used in attacking the mosque, and he died instantly," the statement added.

Eight people were killed in the attack last Friday in a crowded mosque in Quba village in Bisha, a mountainous tribal area in the western province of Asir.

Interior Minister Prince Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz was quoted by the television as saying that King Fahd ordered the post-mortem promotion of the killed policeman to a higher rank and of paying his family 200,000 Saudi riyals (\$53,000).

The King also ordered that the families of the victims should each receive 100,000 riyals (\$26,660). Prince Nayef said.

The Saudi police had intensified their search for Amri, a retired non-commissioned officer who had served in Saudi civil defence, by using airplanes in mountain regions.

The Saudi government, moving swiftly to quell speculation of political dissent, said Amri had been involved in a dispute over land with some people in the mosque.

Saddam tells Baath party to allow debate

BAGHDAD (R) — President Saddam Hussein has told leading members of Iraq's ruling Baath Party to allow more open public debate on government policy.

Addressing leaders of Baath Party branches, mass organisations and trade unions, he said the presidential referendum last week in which he won more than 99 per cent of the vote showed that loyal Iraqis need not fear they were alone.

"So it is no shame for you to say to your people that you want to carry out such-and-such an idea and what do you think? To say we want to lead you and we want you to say that's wrong and what's right in the way we lead you," he said.

"Or to say we want to mobilise you so tell us how to mobilise you... there's plenty of scope for individual judgement."

President Saddam, in a speech delivered on Wednesday and broadcast on Thursday, said the referendum had set a precedent for taking initiatives.

"It was the first time this has happened on such a scale. It was also the first time the party and the people have been left a wide margin to innovate, because there are details no committee or leader can cover," he said.

"To leave a margin for interaction, innovation and initiative, you must rely on the method of guidance rather than instruction, general guidance, that is setting the target and the basic ways towards the target."

President Saddam was vague about what the target might be, but it certainly included economic development, defending Iraq against foreign enemies and asserting Iraq's natural role as "the intellect, the conscience and the sword of the Arab Nation."

He said the referendum took an historic decision because the Iraqi people had faced two paths — "the path of retreat, of submitting their will to the foreigner, or the path which expresses their authenticity and their patriotism."

He said the 3,052 Iraqis who voted "no" in the referendum would not have done so if they had known that everyone else was going to vote, "Yes."

He added: "The weak at heart will pull themselves together after seeing that everyone voted 'Yes' and those who had disease in their hearts will seek treatment and those who wished ill on Iraq from abroad will all despair."

He told Reuters all workers who took part in the strike, that helped sink Ms. Ciller's minority government in a confidence vote earlier this month would be back at work by Monday.

The end of the strike of up to 335,000 public workers comes as immediate relief for Ms. Ciller, but Thursday's big pay settlement, expected to cost \$1.3 billion in 1995 alone, will hamper her efforts to cure the economy's rampant ills.

Thousands of state workers returned to work on Friday after a five-week strike ended when the government and trade unions reached a pay rise settlement worth \$1.3 billion.

Most sectors are resuming work immediately from today," said Yildirim Koc, a senior official at Turkey's largest trade union confederation Turk-Is, which struck the pay deal with Ms. Ciller's government on Thursday.

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Arab League denies blacklisting Giuliani

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab League on Friday denied reports that it had blacklisted the mayor of New York for expelling Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat from a concert earlier in the week.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) semi-official daily Al Ittihad reported on Friday that Mr. Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian National Authority, had asked the Arab League to urge its 22 members to bar the entry of New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

But the league's secretary general, Esmat Abdul Meguid, told AFP: "This is the first time I have heard such reports. During my meeting with Arafat on Wednesday in Cairo he did not ask that the mayor of New York be put on the list of parties and people boycotted by the Arab League."

Al Ittihad said Mr. Giuliani was to be considered "as persona non grata who is banned from entering all Arab countries" after he expelled Mr. Arafat from Monday's concert for world leaders attending the U.N. 50th anniversary celebrations.

The State Department, the United Nations, Arab-Americans and even the Jewish former mayor of New York, Ed Koch, blasted Giuliani while U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali was reported to have apologised to Mr. Arafat.

Mr. Giuliani had made it clear last week that Mr. Arafat and Cuban President Fidel Castro were not welcome at the concert, but Palestinian officials said the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader had been invited by the United Nations.

At the United Nations, Arab diplomats said they wanted Mr. Giuliani barred from the U.N. headquarters and condemned for "unacceptable behaviour."

On Friday, representatives of 21 Arab countries and the PLO organised a committee to consider a response to Mr. Giuliani's action.

7 indicted in illegal American exports to Iran

COLUMBUS (R) — Seven people have been indicted in an alleged conspiracy to export sensitive electronics equipment to Iran, the Justice Department said on Thursday.

"The shipment of sensitive military radios, scramblers and decoders to a rogue state such as Iran is a serious threat to national security," said Edmund Sargus, U.S. attorney for Ohio's southern district.

The seven indicted include two Iranian-born U.S. citizens and an official of the Iranian Defence Ministry. If convicted the defendants could face millions of dollars in fines and long prison terms, Mr. Sargus said.

Only the two Iranian-Americans are in the United States, Mr. Sargus said. The others live either in Iran, which does not have an extradition treaty with the United States, or the United Arab Emirates.

The two U.S. citizens were released from custody after surrendering their passports, Mr. Sargus said.

Two trading companies based in Tehran and the United Arab Emirates were also indicted.

"The U.S. Customs Service considers this case to be among the most significant export enforcement investigations in the country in recent years," said Craig Ziegler, resident agent in charge of the Customs Service.

The indictments charge that between 1991 and 1994, about \$500,000 in electronics, communication equipment, computers and other items were exported without an export licence, Mr. Sargus said.

Radio encryption devices, which can be used to scramble intelligence messages, were of special concern, Mr. Sargus told Reuters.

Federal law prohibits any export of some items due to their military sensitivity, and the national defence authorisation act of 1992 specifically prohibits shipment to Iran of any of the items involved.

The 43-count indictment contains charges of conspiracy, money laundering, fraud and illegal exporting and seeks forfeiture of cash and property, Mr. Sargus said.

Charged were Elham Abrishami, 42, and Mohsen Abrishami, 42, a married couple who live in Dublin, a Columbus suburb. Behrouz Dolatzadeh, an official with the Iranian Defence Ministry in Tehran, Mohammad Salehizadeh, Hassan Gholan Ali Fallah and Ali Derakhshan, all of Tehran, and Jimsheer Khodaghiour of Hanofeel General Trading Est., a United Arab Emirates company, Mr. Sargus said.

Hanofeel and Tak Neda Co. Ltd. of Tehran were the companies indicted, Mr. Sargus said.

The indictments charge that through the trading companies, the defendants shipped the items to the United Arab Emirates and from there to Iran, Mr. Sargus said.

The indictments also charge that with an unnamed co-conspirator, the U.S. couple had invoices and statements related to the export, altered. The indictments also charge that money to buy the equipment was wired from Iranian banks into accounts in the U.S. controlled by the Abrishamis.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lebanon forest fires put out

BEIRUT (R) — Civil defence workers have put out 92 forest and bush fires raging in mountains and hills across Lebanon, Interior Minister Michel Murr said on Friday. "A total of 92 fires started on Thursday in various Lebanese regions have been put out," Mr. Murr told Reuters. He said the fires were caused by hot weather. A civil defence official said firefighters were still battling a blaze in a mountain region near the village of Jesta, about 20 kilometres northeast of Beirut. The official National News Agency said the fires destroyed dozens of hectares of forests. In November 1993, British air force Wessex helicopters helped douse forest fires in mountains south-east of Beirut.

Murder of Italian linked to Somali clan rivalry

MOGADISHU (AFP) — A Somali newspaper said Friday an Italian female doctor murdered in Somalia earlier this week was killed due to rivalry between two sub-clans of Mohammed Farah Aided's larger Habr Gedir group. Graziella Fumagalli was shot dead on Sunday and her colleague, biologist Christoforo Andreoli, received serious facial injuries when four gunmen stormed a hospital run by the humanitarian group Caritas-Italia in Merca, 100 kilometres south of Mogadishu, and opened fire. The Panorama newspaper said that the Duduble sub-clan, to which the gunmen belonged, had complained Caritas-Italia was "dominated" by employees from the Ayr sub-clan. In another development, the chairman of the Merca-based Southern Somalia National Movement, Abdi Warsame Issak, said the murder of Fumagalli was "politically motivated" and dismissed claims there were religious reasons behind it.

Two Swiss nationals drown in Cyprus

NICOSIA (AP) — Two Swiss nationals have drowned while swimming in the sea at the Cypriot resort of Protaras, the official Cyprus News Agency reported. It identified the two as Adolf Meier, 42, and Heidi Muller, 52. The two drowned when they went swimming Thursday afternoon, ignoring warnings by lifeguards that the sea was too rough.

Mrs. Rajavi arrives in Oslo

AMMAN (J.T.) — Maryam Rajavi, the president of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, has arrived in Oslo and was received by leading members of all five main political parties of the country, the ruling Labour Party, the Christian Democratic Party, the Centre Party, the Socialist Party, and the Conservative Party, and members of the Norwegian parliament. Members of the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights and Values in Iran also received Mrs. Rajavi. The Norwegian police set up unprecedented security measures for the arrival of Mrs. Rajavi, and press reports described her as "the Iranian regime's No. 1 enemy" and the woman who has "vowed to topple the Khomeini regime." According to Massoud Rajavi, the chairman of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, Tehran tried its best to obstruct the trip.

Informers shot dead by militants in Egypt

MINYA (AFP) — Militants on Friday shot dead a Christian tractor driver who helped Egyptian security forces flush out fundamentalists hiding in sugarcane fields, police said. Samir Kamal Atallah, 25, was killed as he was walking in the streets of the village of Al Roda close to Mallawi, 300 kilometres (186 miles) south of Cairo. He had also supplied police with information leading to the arrests of militants from his home village, the nearby Al Bayadiya.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 Back to the Future
14:30 Harry and the Hendersons
15:00 Blue Heelers
15:45 Only in Hollywood
16:10 I Love Lucy
16:30 Tarzan
17:00 Children's Programme Coctis Minic
17:30 L'Histoire Du Cirque
18:00 Drama Series — Operation Open
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Magazine — Fast Pas Revier
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Major Dad
20:00 The First Wives
20:25 The Bold And The Beautiful
21:10 Star Trek — The Next Generation
22:00 News in English
22:25 Film: "Two Kings of Love"
23:00 The Tin Flute
00:30 My Good Friend

PRAYER TIMES

04:26 Fajr
05:44 Sunrise
11:19 Dhuhr
14:26 Asr
16:05 Maghrib
18:13 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swiffeth, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Fernanda Church Tel. 623666
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625756
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Temperatures are expected to drop with clouds building up. There will be a chance of scattered

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

showers particularly in the northern parts of the Kingdom and winds westerly moderate to active. In qaba, winds will be westerly moderate to active and seas rough.

Min./Max. (temp.)
Amman 13 / 25
Aqaba 21 / 30
Doejris 12 / 27
Jordan Valley 21 / 30

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 29, Aqaba 33 Humidity readings: Amman 27 per cent, Aqaba 33 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Ramzi Mazari 894788
Dr. Khalil Abu Marjoub 779797
Dr. Amni Al Hawamdneh 833350
Dr. Khalil Al Tushul 757235
Firas pharmacy 661912
Fernandes pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairookh pharmacy 626762
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmiesani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ali Al Omari 272032
Aqaba pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Salim Al Qasbi 981282
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 836390
Public Security Department 630721
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897487
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 623101
Abulali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power 636381
RJ Flight Information 68-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 68-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 6442816
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn. 6424412
Jahat Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636141
Palestine, Shmiesani 607071
Shmiesani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mushter Hospital 6672279
New Delhi (RJ) 60224950
Amal Hospital 6641646
Al-Ahli, Abulali 7771013
Italian, Al-Muhajireen 7771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 87511126
Army, Marka 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224950
Amal Hospital 6641646
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983321
Zarqa National Hospital (09)983321
Jbn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hama Modern Hospital (09)989090

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)755555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)727275
The Al Nafes Hospital (02)247041
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)522615, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:45 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
07:00 Damascus (RJ)
08:45 New Delhi (RJ)
09:15 Aqaba (RJ)
09:30 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
09:35 Beirut (RJ)
10:00 Colombo (RJ)
10:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
10:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
10:45 London, Berlin (RJ)
10:45 Vienna (RJ)
20:55 Vienna (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:45 Beirut (ME)
12:10 Rome (AZ)
13:30 Vienna (OS)
14:00 Bahrain, Sharjah (GF)
19:15 Dubai (EK)
20:25 Cairo (MS)
22:20 Larnaca (CY)
23:20 Damascus, Paris (AF)
00:25 Amsterdam (KL)
06:50 London (BA)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:40 Beirut (RJ)
07:00 Aqaba, Vienna (RJ)
10:30 Aqaba, Vienna (RJ)
11:00 Vienna (RJ)
11:40 Aqaba, Paris (RJ)
11:40 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10 Paris (RJ)
12:15 Cairo (RJ)
12:15 Brussels, Amsterdam (RJ)
13:05 London (RJ)
20:05 Larnaca (RJ)
20:10 Riyadh, Dubai (RJ)
20:20 Jeddah (RJ)
20:45 Bahrain, Dubai (RJ)
21:20 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in this per kg.

Apple 700/500
Banana 600
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Cauliflower 200/140
Carrot 400/300
Cauliflower 240/140
Cucumbers (large) 200/150
Cucumbers (small) 240/150
Eggplant 220/150
Garlic 750/600
Grapes 600/500
Grape Fruit 250/150
Lemon 260/150
Marrow (large) 140/90
Marrow (small) 230/140
Olives (green) 420/250
Onion (dry) 250/150
Orange 500/400
Pepper (hot) 200/150
Pepper (sweet)

7 indicted in illegal American exports to Iran

COLUMBUS (R) — Seven people have been indicted in an alleged conspiracy to export sensitive electronic equipment to Iran, the Justice Department said Thursday.

The indictment, which was filed in the Southern District of New York, charges the seven individuals with conspiring to export military radios, search engines, and other electronic equipment to Iran in violation of the Iran Arms and Related Materials Export Control Act.

The seven indicted individuals are: two Iranian-born citizens and an official of Iran's Defense Ministry; a Canadian citizen; a U.S. citizen; and three U.S. citizens who are currently residing in the United States.

The indictment also charges the individuals with conspiring to export the equipment to Iran in violation of the Iran Arms and Related Materials Export Control Act.

Queen tells Israeli daily all parties in region must be able to define their rights

TEL AVIV (AP) — Closer ties will be difficult "until there is a feeling that all the parties in the region have achieved their rights — that the Palestinians, the Jordanians, the Syrians, have a right to define their future," said Her Majesty Queen Noor in an interview published Friday in Yediot Ahronot, Israel's largest newspaper.

"The people in the Arab World — not only in Jordan — listen to every word that is being said on your side," the Queen told the Israeli reporter.

"Every initiative, every activity, every gesture. They are following you with seven eyes because we are still in a stage of uncertainty. There are many suspicions concerning everything that is happening."

A year after the historic peace treaty between Jordan and Israel, Queen Noor has yet to visit Israel or even to meet many Israelis.

Queen Noor is not the only Jordanian staying away from the Jewish state. Only 3,000 Jordanians had visited Israel by September of this year, compared to 73,000 Israelis visiting Jordan.

The Queen said she would like to learn more about Israel and Judaism and to visit Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza — "something I couldn't do up to now because of the occupation."

"And of course — Jerusalem," she added.

The Queen said she and His Majesty King Hussein share a deep desire for peace in the Middle East.

"This is an issue that deepened the ties between us even before we got married," she said.

King Hussein, the Queen said, is "a shy and quiet man."

"I have become a better human being with his help and his influence," she said. "Not only did he deepen my knowledge, but also my feelings for others and my patience, even my love, and mainly my faith, faith in myself, faith in humanity."

The Queen said she was not sure until the last minute last year that there would be peace with Israel.

But, she added, "I have lived in the region for 20 years, I had a hunch that things were leading towards a peace agreement."

Princess Sarvath praises achievements of UWC national committee, students

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Princess Sarvath Al Hassan met with members of the Jordan National Committee of the United World Colleges as well as several students who benefited from the scholarship programme sponsored by the National Committee, a Royal Court statement said.

Princess Sarvath, who recently ended her more than one decade chairmanship of the committee, expressed her pleasure at having worked with the committee members and thanked them for their support and interest during the past years in selecting Jordanian scholarship students to study abroad, the statement said.

The Princess said she values her 12 years of association with the United World Colleges and is proud of the achievements of the Jordanian students who benefited from the scholarship programme.

At the meeting, Wednesday, the students and members thanked Princess Sarvath for personally initiating the scholarship programme, and for setting the norms and the standards of objectivity in selection, and most of all for her concern for the welfare of each student.



Minister outlines how universities can play a post-MENA role

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Higher Education Rafea Saoud Friday said the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit is not to be regarded as an international consortium of donor countries, adding that participants to MENA are not coming here to help fund Jordan's universities or other institutions.

The participation in MENA by the countries higher education institutes, said Dr. Saoud, consists of a working paper on the capabilities of the Jordanian universities and their role in helping to support economic projects.

The minister said Jordan's five state and eight private universities in addition to Al al Bayt University which has an international nature, have a total of 2,700 Ph.D. holders teaching in various disciplines and sciences.

Dr. Saoud added that more than 55,000 students are enrolled at these universities, including 10,000 non-Jordanian students.

He said universities can play a role in conducting feasibility studies for investment projects in Jordan, preparing engineering, technical and construction designs for the various projects, and in providing training.

They also can carry out assessments for various projects and work out solutions to problems which might impair the smooth implementation of the various economic schemes in question.

He noted that most of the Jordanian universities have specialised departments capable of carrying out such tasks, including consulting and technical services centres.

Dr. Saoud said Jordan ranks third worldwide in terms of the number of students in the 18-23 age group who are enrolled in higher education institutions.

He said that investment in private-sector education has become an example for the region, adding that 25,000 students are enrolled in the six private universities in the Kingdom. The first of these, he said, was established six years ago.

Delegations start arriving for MENA summit

AMMAN (Petra) — Arriving in Amman Friday ahead of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit were delegations from Canada, Russia, Qatar, Yemen, Singapore and New Zealand.

Among those arriving were Canada's Foreign Minister Andre Ouellet, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Victor Posolavsky, Palestinian National Authority (PNA) under secretary of Planning Majdi Khaled and representatives of the Federations of Chambers of Commerce in the West Bank and Gaza and the Palestinian Businessmen's Association, Saudi Arabia's minister of trade, Oussama Ben Jaffar Faqih, Qatar's under secretary of the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Youssef Hussein Kamal, and the president of the Qatari Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassem Al Thani, a Singaporean delegation, Yemen's deputy prime minister and minister of planning and development, Abdul Qader Bajamal, the under secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ghalib Ali Jamil and the under secretary of the Free Zones Corporation, Abdul Karim Muteir, and New Zealand's Ambassador to Turkey.

Canadian Foreign Minister Andre Ouellet, who is leading a large delegation from his ministry and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), said that his country will submit several project proposals which have already been discussed with His Majesty King Hussein during his last visit to Canada.

Mr. Ouellet said his country appreciates King Hussein's efforts and his role in convening the Amman summit. The summit will offer participants the opportunity to contribute to the peace process through regional projects, he said.

Peace efforts by the world community to establish stability in the Middle East will, in turn, reflect most positively on international relations, added Mr. Ouellet.

The Canadian delegation, comprising members of its private and public sectors, reflects the country's commitment to helping make the conference a success as well as its determination to contribute to the implementation of investment projects.

Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and senior officials along with Canadian Ambassador to Jordan Michel de Salaberry welcomed the Canadian minister and his delegation upon arrival.

In his arrival statement, Mr. Posolavsky said that Russia hopes the MENA summit will be directed at achieving integration between the economies of the Middle East countries.

The Russian delegation will submit proposals for projects on water desalination, and energy as well as railway and road construction schemes and gas, oil and water pipelines and will back efforts for establishing a Middle East Development and Investment Bank, Mr. Posolavsky said.

Khalid Usseili, a businessman from the West Bank who arrived with the Palestinian delegation told Petra that "in order for the peace process to succeed, it should be coupled with an economic development plan to improve the region's economic performance, change the hostile atmosphere which pre-



Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdul Karim Kabariti Friday receives Canadian Foreign Minister Andre Ouellet upon his arrival in Amman to attend the Middle East and North Africa economic summit which starts Sunday (Petra photo)

voiled in the region in the past, and alter the quality of life of the citizens."

Mr. Usseili stressed that the MENA summit is the mechanism to ensuring economic development.

He said participants in the conference should demonstrate to the ordinary citizen that a tangible improvement will result from the peace making process.

Mr. Usseili stressed the importance of providing financing to the regional projects in order to ensure the success of the peace process.

Another businessman from Jerusalem said the MENA summit will contribute to enhancing the Middle East peace process. Hanna Ghazawi said "Palestinian businessmen will initiate dialogue with Jordanian and Arab businessmen on setting up development projects, particularly in the area of tourism and housing."

Saudi Minister of Trade Oussama Benn Jaffar Faqih said he was glad to be visiting his "second country, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan," a praised the special relations between Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Mr. Faqih said the MENA summit is a positive and important step on the path of enhancing regional peace and security. He wished the conference every success.

Sheikh Hamid of Qatar said that his country has prepared 22 proposals for the summit, adding that MENA is a continuation of the Casablanca economic summit which was held last year.

The Singaporean delegation was led by Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of Parliament Niman Ben Yousef who arrived in Amman from the West Bank Friday.

Mr. Ben Yousef said his delegation intends to scrutinise the various proposals and projected schemes on the agenda before deciding on its participation.

He added that his country was keen on contributing to the construction of sea and air ports in which it has wide experience.

Yemen's deputy prime minister and minister of planning said in his arrival statement that the conference will enhance Jordan's drive to attain a comprehensive peace.

The Yemeni delegation will submit several proposals, one of which is for the creation of a free-trade zone in Aden as one of the regional schemes, he said.

IAF weekly asks Rawabdeh about politics in schools, peace process and Iraqi defector

AMMAN (J.T.) — School teachers should not be politically active at schools and instead should dedicate themselves solely to their educational mission, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh said in an interview with Al A'mal, the weekly magazine of the Islamic Action Front.

Teachers who wished to discuss politics should do so in their own political forums, he said.

In an interview with the Islamic Action Magazine, Mr. Rawabdeh said that the Ministry of Education does not want to see schools serving as political arenas in the same way that the government does not want to see mosque minbars (pulpits) serving as political rostrums.

"We have allowed the opponents of the peace process to air their views openly on television because the government favours dialogue, but it does not accept accusations of treachery levelled at it," said Mr. Rawabdeh, himself a former member of the Muslim Brotherhood group.

Asked why the government had failed to deny accusations by Salameh Ne'matt in the London-based Al Hayat newspaper that government officials were among Jordanians who had received payments from Iraq, Mr. Rawabdeh said it was the duty of the government and Parliament to investigate cases of monetary corruption.

Mr. Rawabdeh said that referring the case to court is an exercise of democracy and he denied that the government was involved in the case.

"We respect Mr. Ne'matt as a person, but he has to disclose to the court the name of officials who gave him the information and those who received money," said the minister.

When asked whether 90 per cent of the projects to be submitted to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit were related to services and tourism, and if they entailed the creation of service sector jobs for Jordanians as a way to end unemployment, Mr. Rawabdeh said Jordan has a duty to provide facilities and services because business cannot be conducted without telephones, roads, railways or airports



Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh

problem in the country.

Asked why Iraq was not invited to the conference, Mr. Rawabdeh said circumstances concerning the sanctions do not allow that country's participation, but he added that despite Iraq's absence, Iraqi-Jordanian relations would not likely be affected.

Syria and Lebanon both have important roles in the region, and without them no comprehensive peace can be anticipated, the minister said in reply to a question on both countries' absence at the conference.

The minister said that Jordan had extended invitations to Damascus and Beirut but had received no reply in return.

The minister was asked whether there were differences in views among members of the Cabinet concerning the Iraqi defector, Hussein Kamel.

Opponents of the government claim that such differences exist, the minister said. But he also added that "differences in views is something healthy and natural, but in this case there were no differences in views, and the government was dealing with this matter in a very satisfactory and successful manner."

Asked about Jordan's relations with Syria, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, the minister said that reconciliation was always Jordan's solution, and that the country will work relentlessly to end inter-Arab differences.

On his views of the Islamic Action Front Party, the minister said he respected the front and its role despite the fact, he said, that it sometimes acts in an undemocratic manner.

He said the government welcomes the opposition views but prefers dialogue and the democratic approach.

Asked if it was true that as Minister of Education he had hired thousands of people from his election district, the minister strongly denied the allegation.

'Blind women must get career training to gain their independence'

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A group of professional women concluded at a five-day workshop that the way to help blind women in the Arab World gain their independence is through rehabilitation programmes for that focus on career training. The women, who drafted and passed resolution on this particular issue, were themselves all blind.

With proper career training blind women can take their rightful place in the community, they said in introducing their resolutions which are to be presented to the General Assembly of the World Blind Union, in Toronto, Canada, next year.

One of the resolutions is to include Braille in vocational rehabilitation programmes, in order to eradicate illiteracy and give women a wider range of choices.

"I was introduced to Braille in a carpet weaving programme, from there I continued my education and received a Ph.D. in history," said Sa'eeda Husni.

In order for a blind person to function on an equal basis with others in the sighted world, courses on child care, mobility training skills, and home economics should also be available to blind women, the workshop participants stressed.

"To my knowledge these courses are not available in any country," said Kiki Norstom, president of the International Blind Women's Committee.

Possessing these skills, personal grooming, and housekeeping, will create self-confidence and independence, said Ruth Chambers in her lecture on independence for blind women.

Ms. Chambers also added that this independence will enable the blind to overcome shyness and help them to be more assertive.

The workshop participants elected four women to represent the Middle East and North Africa region at next year's World Blind Union General Assembly.

This four-member committee will coordinate together for the next 10

months, to define problems concerning blind women in the region.

Hala Kubesis, 22, who was elected to the committee, told the Jordan Times that the inability of some families and society to accept blind women can stand in the way of their enjoying their full rights.

"We need support in order to have self-confidence, which gives us more energy to move and change," said Ms. Kubesis who is in her fourth year at university in Lebanon.

She added that, "as blind women we never see ourselves in the mirror and assume we are ugly and will never find love."

Through my education I gained confidence, and my low self-esteem disappeared," she said.

Helen Shabbib, also elected to the new committee, said schools for the blind are not only the responsibility of charitable organisations, but that the government should shoulder their responsibility in that arena as well.

At the end of the conference, a nine-year-old student from The Noor School for the Blind told the Jordan Times that when she grows up she is going to become a lawyer.

"I want to spread justice," said Rawan Barakat — no doubt already sensing the discrimination her elder colleagues have said they faced.

WHAT'S GOING ON

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>FILM</p> <p>* "Oliver Twist" at Instituto Cervantes at 5.00pm.</p> <p>SEMINAR</p> <p>* "Between Art and Music" by As'ad Mohammad Ali at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art, Gardens Street at 6.30pm.</p> <p>LECTURE</p> <p>* "The Future of the Palestinian Banking System (Arabic), by Dr. Fouad Bseiso, governor of the Palestine Central Bank, at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6.00pm.</p> <p>BOOK FAIR</p> <p>* Fifth International Book Fair at the Universal Expo Centre, University Road</p> | <p>BANI HAMIDA FALL EXHIBITION</p> <p>* The Bani Hamida Women's Weaving Project presents "Winds of Change" its fall exhibition at the Jerusalem Insurance Company in Shmeisani (tel. 658696)</p> <p>EXHIBITIONS</p> <p>* Paintings by Salam Kanaan and ceramics by Najwa Annab and Margaret Tadros at Alia Art Gallery.</p> <p>* Paintings by Iraqi artists Nazem Hamed at Orfali Gallery.</p> <p>* Paintings by Iraqi artist Saleh Jumaili at Ab'ad Gallery.</p> <p>* Paintings by Shakhir Hassan Al-Said at the French Cultural Centre. Posters on Louis Pasteur's achievements.</p> <p>* Selected works by the young and the established at The Gallery, Hotel Inter-Continental.</p> |
|---|--|

India amends election law to prepare for Kashmir polls

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India has amended a key election law to hold the first legislative polls since 1987 in Kashmir in a desperate government attempt to end the country's most intractable problem, officials said Friday.

Under Indian election laws, if a candidate for parliamentary or state legislative elections dies or is killed, polling in the constituency is put off until a later date which can be weeks away.

But this rule has now been changed so that (Muslim) militants don't resort to killing candidates left and right to sabotage the election, an official of the Home Ministry said.

The death of a candidate in the proposed elections, already postponed several times by New Delhi, will no longer be grounds for cancelling voting in the concerned constituency, officials said.

Under the amended legislation, political parties would be allowed to substitute their nominees who die or are slain before polling without affecting the elec-

tions.

A similar amendment was also made ahead of the February 1993 balloting to elect a local government in the neighbouring state of Punjab at the height of a bloody Sikh separatist campaign that has since been crushed.

New Delhi has also asked Kashmiri bureaucrats here to be ready to go the northern state for the proposed elections, and has ordered a large fleet of bullet-proof cars for poll campaigning, the officials said.

The developments underline the Indian government's determination to hold the Kashmir polls despite boycott and sabotage threats by Muslim separatists waging an armed campaign in the Himalayan province since 1989.

Indian officials say an election would restore democratic process in the northern state, probably isolate guerrillas opposed to the polls as hardliners, and ease Western pressures on New Delhi over a political settlement.

Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, has

been ruled directly by New Delhi since 1990. The last elections in 1987 were marked by allegations of vote fraud.

The current spell of federal rule over Kashmir ends in January.

Home Minister Shankarrao Chavan said last week that if the polls were again put off, "it would only encourage militants to create (more) trouble."

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao has been trying to coax the pro-India National Conference Party, which once ruled Kashmir, to take part in the polls. Newspapers say its supremo Farooq Abdullah may be willing.

But Mr. Abdullah, a Muslim who is on the death list of Muslim militants, wants New Delhi to grant maximum autonomy to Kashmir before announcing the elections. Indian political parties are divided on the issue.

Mr. Rao directed his ministers this month to ensure the availability of foodgrains, kerosene, petrol and diesel in the strife-torn Kashmir Valley ahead of

winter in a move aimed at winning voter sympathy. Mr. Rao's Congress (I) Party says it has already begun an election campaign of sorts.

"We have held some public meetings for the first time in the (Kashmir) Valley," party spokesman Ved Prakash told AFP here. "People in Kashmir are sick and tired of violence and want elections."

but Muslim separatist leaders are equally firm on boycotting or sabotaging the elections, and say the polls would only result in more bloodshed in a state where more than 12,000 have been killed by official count since 1989.

Muslim leaders instead want a referendum to determine the future of Kashmir, whose ownership is disputed by India and Pakistan.

"The government can force elections on Kashmir ... but this will only be a fraud and not a permanent solution," said Shabir Shah, Kashmir's most respected Muslim leader. "It will not help things."



Former South Korea President Roh Tae-Woo rubs his eye during a news conference at his home in Seoul to apologise for amassing a slush fund of \$650 million during his tenure from 1987 to 1993 (AFP photo)

Former South Korea president admits holding slush fund

SEOUL (R) — South Korea's former President Roh Tae-Woo made a tearful public apology Friday for secretly amassing a \$654 million slush fund while in office, sparking immediate calls for his arrest.

"I now feel limitlessly shameful for being a former president," he said in a television address.

Reading from a prepared text and occasionally wiping away tears, Mr. Roh said he raised 500 billion won (\$654 million) in political funds, keeping about 170 billion won (\$222 million) when he left office in February 1993 after five years.

"Citizens how much frustration and rage have you felt in the past few days?" Mr. Roh said. "It is natural that you have burning rage and accusations towards me."

"This may sound like an excuse. But such political funds, although wrong, have long been our political practice," he said, adding that the money was mostly raised in the form of donations from businessmen.

Mr. Roh was the last in a line of military-backed presidents that worked hand-in-glove with big business in an often sleazy alliance that powered South Korea's economic development.

He told the nation he would report to legal authorities for questioning

if necessary.

A statement by the ruling Democratic Liberal Party said it welcomed Mr. Roh's statement he was prepared to be questioned. But it added: "We expect prosecutors to thoroughly investigate the truth and details of secret funds."

The government's senior prosecutor, Ahn Kang-Min, said although the prosecution will look into the statement by Mr. Roh "there is no change in our policy of continuing our investigation, regardless of his statement."

The opposition Democratic Party dismissed Mr. Roh's apology as a sham and demanded his arrest.

"In a word it was not an apology to the people but nothing but a fraudulent drama deceiving the people," a party spokesman said. "The government and prosecution must immediately call Roh and arrest him."

Mr. Roh was finally forced into an apology after government prosecutors Thursday said they had uncovered a total of \$130 million of slush funds linked to him.

Revelations about his hidden fortune leaked out over a period of several days, mounting all the time and triggering a public outcry. Mr. Roh was abandoned even by leaders of the ruling party, which he once led.

The scandal has

embarrassed President Kim Young-Sam, a close Roh ally, as he leads the ruling party into general elections next April. Mr. Kim took power from Mr. Roh promising to clean up government.

Mr. Roh's aides consistently denied Mr. Roh was sitting on illegal money, even after his former top security aide stepped forward to say he managed a \$48.5 billion won (\$63 million) slush fund for his ex-boss.

The scandal broke Tuesday last week when an opposition lawmaker told parliament he had been tipped off by bankers and individuals that Mr. Roh had secretly amassed a political fortune of 400 billion won (\$522 million).

Mr. Kim, visiting Hawaii, told Korean reporters accompanying him Friday he had twice told Prime Minister Lee Hong-Koo that the government must carry out a thorough investigation.

The ruling party adopted a resolution Thursday demanding Mr. Roh reveal the truth and apologise.

In the Chinese capital Beijing, visiting South Korean opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung told reporters Friday Mr. Roh gave him two billion won (\$2.6 million) during the 1992 presidential election period, South Korean media reported.

Alec Baldwin arrested for battery

LOS ANGELES (R) — Alec Baldwin was arrested Thursday for allegedly punching a photographer who tried to take pictures of the movie star and his actress wife Kim Basinger as they arrived home with their new-born daughter. Police said Baldwin, 37, was booked on one count of misdemeanor battery and released on his own recognisance after the incident outside the couple's mansion in suburban Woodland Hills. Baldwin allegedly struck Alan Zanger, a freelance photographer well known among Hollywood's paparazzi corps, as he waited to take pictures when Baldwin and Basinger drove up in their car. The 51-year-old photographer reportedly complained that his nose was broken. In a statement released Thursday night, Baldwin said he had repeatedly asked Mr. Zanger to leave his family alone. "Anyone with a shred of human decency would understand that there are times in your life when you want your privacy respected, whether you are a public figure or not," Baldwin said. "I do believe that bringing your wife and 3-day-old baby home from the hospital is one of those occasions. I asked him to repeatedly stop filming us and he refused each request," Baldwin said. "I dispute his contention that I broke his nose or caused any facial damage," but Baldwin said he was "sorry for any problems caused and I look forward to Mr. Zanger and I putting this behind us." Mr. Zanger reportedly placed Baldwin under citizen's arrest after the incident. He told police Baldwin jumped out of the family car and hit him with a closed fist, according to television news reports.

Cliff Richard receives Knighthood

LONDON (AP) — Cliff Richard, Britain's most durable rocker, received a knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II Wednesday — and said he was glad it wasn't just for singing. "It's no great shakes being a rock star, although I love it myself," said the 55-year-old new Sir Cliff. His award cites his charity work and that, he said, "lifts it above what I do for a living." He is reputed to be the favourite singer of the 95-year-old Queen Mother, Richard, who says he's been celibate since an affair with a guitarist's wife 30 years ago, has had 115 hits since the 1950s, including Bachelor Boy, Travellin' Light, and 'I Love You.

After 50 years, U.N. institutes no smoking ban

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — As more than 100 world leaders discussed how the United Nations could meet the challenges of the 21st century, the world body sprung one immediate reform on them all: Banning smoking on all premises. The very day the 129 leaders were celebrating the U.N.'s 50th anniversary, the ban went into effect Tuesday at the U.N. Headquarters, one of the last bastions of resistance to New York's stringent anti-smoking laws. An internal communique announcing the measure said the organisation had the moral responsibility of providing a safe environment to its staff. But while most smokers in New York have to puff their cigarettes on the sidewalk, U.N. diplomats and staffers will be allowed to enjoy a smoke in a few places exempt from the ban. One third of all eating areas inside the building will be reserved for smokers, as will the largest meeting halls, although the habit will be "discouraged" at all times.

Armenia reactivates Nuclear reactor

YEREVAN (AFP) — An Armenian nuclear reactor at a power station shut down after a huge earthquake more than six years ago was switched back on again overnight, the government said Friday.

The reactor, one of two at the Oktemberian plant, is at minimum power but is due to be connected to the power network in two weeks and be running at normal capacity of nine million kilowatts per hour by the end of November.

The plant, in an earthquake-prone area 30 kilo-

metres from the capital Yerevan, was shut down after an earthquake in December 1988 in which some 25,000 people died.

There are no plans to reopen the other reactor in the near future, according to the government communique issued here.

The relaunch of the reactor will boost Armenia's power supplies as it tries to minimise the effect of an energy embargo imposed by neighbouring Azerbaijan over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The enclave is in

Azerbaijan but controlled by Armenian separatists and more than 20,000 people died in fighting there between 1988 and a cease-fire deal in May last year.

The International Atomic Energy Agency gave Armenian authorities the green light to switch the plant on again if modernisation work was carried out.

Armenian experts said however that, although the power station had been modernised, lack of cash meant only the most urgent work had been done.

Shooting ends S. Korea spy hunt

SEOUL (R) — A suspected North Korean spy was shot in South Korea Friday, ending a massive three-day manhunt involving 20,000 security forces, sniffer dogs and helicopters.

Authorities first said he had died at the scene of the shooting, then said he died of his wounds in a military hospital. A hospital spokesman said the man was brain-dead but his heart was beating on a life-support system.

The alleged Communist infiltrator was shot and captured in rugged hills near the town of Puyo, 140 kilometres south of the capital Seoul.

He had been on the run, apparently nursing a bullet wound on his leg, since a gunfight with police Tuesday in which his colleague was shot and arrested.

The hospital spokesman said the alleged agent, identified as Park Kwang-Nam, 31, was flown to the capital.

Park was hit three times in the head and leg in thickly wooded slopes where he had been hiding. He was spotted just 2.5 kilometres from the scene of the first clash.

A Puyo police spokesman said one bullet wound on his leg apparently came from Tuesday's clash.

He was found with a Belgian-made Browning pistol fitted with a silencer, four bullets, \$1,500 in \$100 bills, 9,000 won (about \$12) and a telephone card.

South Korea issued a strong warning to Pyongyang over the alleged espionage incident, the second suspected infiltration by Communist agents in a week.

"The government sternly protests such irrational provocations by North Korea in the name of the (unified Korean) nation's 70 million people," Information Minister Oh In-Hwan said. "If such provocations recur, we will not sit idly by."

Security forces mounted one of the biggest man-hunts ever in South Korea, mobilising reservists and pulling troops out of a joint U.S.-South Korean military exercise. Helicopters blasted loudspeakers appeals to the man to surrender and save his life.

Roadblocks were set up along highways around Puyo and the hunt extended as far north as Seoul,

Japan proposes to cut 20 % of military

TOKYO (R) — Japan's Defence Ministry proposed Friday to cut about 20 per cent of its allowed quota of troops and weapons in the first comprehensive review of the country's military strength in two decades, officials said.

The Defence Ministry's proposed cuts will form the basis of a new, post-cold war version of Japan's long-term defence policy guideline, called the defence programme outline, to be issued in December. The current one was adopted in 1976.

"Prime Minister Murayama will take this table (ministry's draft proposal) into account to prepare the new programme outline," top government spokesman Koken Nosaka told a news conference Friday.

The latest ministry proposal was submitted to Friday's National Security Council meeting chaired by Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama, the highest decision-making organ on defence issues. The council will finalise a new outline in December.

Until 1990, Japan's Defence Ministry had been officially describing the Soviet Union as a "latent threat." With its demise, however, the government withdrew that.

Under the 1976 programme, Japan achieved a substantial military buildup

with what was considered the second biggest defence budget in the world — at more than \$50 billion a year.

That would be several billion dollars more if military pensions, which do not come under defence outlays in Japan, were added according to the formula accepted by NATO members.

Earlier this month, the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) confirmed what had long been pointed out by many military analysts.

"With the possible exception of Russia, Japan now spends appreciably more on defence than any other country apart from the United States," said the IISS's annual military balance.

In terms of numbers, the 1976 document set out to achieve 180,000 troops in the army, 60 surface vessels in the navy and 350 fighters in the air force to repel a "limited aggression."

Most targets, except for the army's size, have been met.

Friday's ministry draft said the quota for the army's troops will be reduced to 144,000 from a ceiling of 180,000. But the actual number of troops in the army now stands at about 158,800 because of long-standing recruiting problems.

The 13 divisions in the army, called the Ground Self-Defence Force, will be reduced to eight, the draft said. New helicopter-mobile brigades will be introduced.

Of the army's 45,000 reservists, 15,000 will be designated special reservists who can serve at 48 hours notice, the draft said. Tanks will be cut from 1,200 to 940.

The navy, or Maritime Self-Defence Force, will slash 20 per cent of its 60 surface vessels, halve its minesweeper fleet and reduce from 100 to 80 the number of P-3C anti-submarine planes. The 16-boat submarine fleet will not be affected.

The air force, or Air Self-Defence Force, will cut 10 per cent of its frontline strength of 350 fighters but will ask to introduce air-refuelling tankers, the draft said.

Two of the army divisions to be abolished are in Hokkaido, the northernmost main island facing Russia, the draft said.

Ministry officials said creation of the helicopter-mobile units was in response to demands for a quick-moving force to meet acts such as the nerve gas attack on Tokyo's subway in March and natural disasters like the massive earthquake that killed more than 5,000 people in Kobe in January.

Japan cult guru rehires lawyer

TOKYO (R) — The legal case involving the guru accused of masterminding the Tokyo subway gas attack took a bizarre turn Friday when the cult leader reapointed the lawyer he had fired just two days earlier.

On Wednesday, the eve of his trial on charges of ordering the subway attack, Aum leader Shoko Asahara had sacked his private lawyer and thereby forced the Tokyo district court to call off the eagerly awaited proceedings at the last minute.

Then on Friday, with

Japan still puzzling over his motives, Asahara promptly reinstated lawyer Shoji Yokoyama. Court officials said he made the move soon after the presiding judge ordered the selection of a separate, court-appointed lawyer to minimise disruption in the case.

Under Japanese law, murder trials cannot be held without at least one defence lawyer. A defendant can fire a privately hired lawyer but not one appointed by the court.

It was still not clear when the trial might begin.

It was also unclear whether the fire-and-rehire strategy was a deliberate ploy to delay the trial, as suggested by the Japanese media, or the result of muddled communications between the lawyer and guru of the Aum Shinri Kyo (Aum Supreme Truth Sect) doomsday cult.

The move left Aum-watchers confounded.

"I don't know what these people are really up to but they are just trying to make a fool of the court," said lawyer Masaki Kito.

United Nations (AP) — The United Nations in Bosnia bought snowmobiles it never used, uniforms that were not needed and 1,400 generators, many of which were not even taken out of their crates, according to a U.N. report on waste.

In Somalia, U.N. peacekeepers spent two-and-a-half times as much as they needed for water and overpaid a fuel contractor by almost \$1 million.

These and other examples of gross U.N. waste are contained in the first report by the new head of the U.N. Internal Oversight Agency. It comes after dozens of

19 perish in Iceland avalanche

REYKJAVIK (R) — At least 19 people were killed when an avalanche smashed into a tiny village in north-west Iceland Thursday, sweeping away houses in its path, rescue workers said Friday.

Rescue officials said the only person still listed as missing was a one-year-old baby. The search continued into the night at the remote northwestern village of Flateyri, they added.

Rescuers, working in blizzards, dug out 10 people alive from under the snow, among them a family of four. Their house was destroyed but they were unharmed.

An eyewitness described seeing snow and houses rumbling by as he stood in his kitchen. "I saw the house next to mine come rushing past me, completely intact," said Gunnar Valdimarsson.

The identities of the vic-

tims were being withheld while their relatives were notified.

The avalanche struck a residential area of the village at four a.m. (0400 GMT) and buried 17 houses in snow and ice. Flateyri has about 300 inhabitants.

Emergency teams with doctors and dogs used Coast Guard boats and helicopters to reach Flateyri — perched on the side of a fjord — as its roads were blocked in the bad weather.

The region suffers the severest conditions in Iceland's harsh winters. Only last January it was declared a danger zone because of the avalanche threat.

"Our thoughts are with the people of Flateyri," Justice Minister Thorsteinn Palsson said.

Bad weather in the region toppled electricity pylons and closed most main roads. International flights had to

be diverted from Iceland Thursday.

Flateyri is close to the small village of Sudavik, where 14 people were killed in an avalanche in January.

This avalanche came in the wake of a growing debate over whether authorities should evacuate people permanently from villages in avalanche-prone areas, particularly Sudavik and Flateyri.

Prime Minister David Oddson, stranded in New York by the airport closure at home, told Icelandic Television the disaster would be discussed at a special cabinet meeting Friday.

"We can never completely control nature but it is clear that we must do something about this problem. I don't think anyone could have foreseen that something like this might happen again in the same year," he said.

U.N. watchdogs say waste rampant

world leaders, including President Bill Clinton, marked the 50th anniversary of the organisation with demands for financial reform and streamlining.

"The bureaucracy has grown without pruning for many years, procedures and structures have become too rigid, frustrating creativity and individual initiative; overlapping and duplication of responsibilities have not been adequately addressed let alone eliminated," Karl Paschke said in the report.

The audit reviews the past seven and a half months since the Oversight Agency was established.

Mr. Paschke said that as a

result of his oversight department, some \$4 million in overpayments have been recovered or prevented and an additional \$13 million in savings has been identified.

"Congress is always ready to criticise, but clearly I must say that while it does not happen overnight, internal oversight is beginning to have an impact on the organisation," Mr. Paschke told reporters after releasing the report.

But he added that the U.N. financial crisis, caused in part by Washington's \$1.3 billion debt to the organisation, is hampering efforts to reform.

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Yeltsin spends comfortable night in hospital

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin spent a comfortable night in hospital after being taken ill with a mild heart attack, but was expected to spend a week there recovering, top officials said Friday.

"He is ok, he is ok, he is ok," Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin told reporters.

Mr. Chernomyrdin said Mr. Yeltsin, 64, was likely to spend a week at the Central Clinic-Hospital. He was rushed there by helicopter Thursday after being taken ill at a country retreat.

Mr. Yeltsin's press spokesman, Sergei Medvedev, speaking separately to reporters in the Kremlin, said the president had spent a peaceful night and rose early as usual.

"At the moment his arterial pressure and temperature are normal," Mr. Medvedev said.

After news broke Thursday of Mr. Yeltsin's new bout of heart trouble, aides said the president had been exhausted by his trip to France and to the United States where he had a summit meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

He suffered a similar mild heart attack in July, apparently caused by the same "ischemic condition" in which the supply of oxygen is restricted.

Mr. Chernomyrdin, who would automatically take over as acting head of state if Mr. Yeltsin were incapacitated, said Mr. Yeltsin had not finished a course of treatment for a cold before leaving on his foreign trip last Friday.

The president, speaking at an economic seminar, said he did not think the president's illness would have a negative impact on the campaign for Russia's Dec. 17 parliamentary election.

"There is no reason to get worried about this," he said.

Aides have said there is no reason for a temporary transfer of power to Mr. Chernomyrdin, 57.

"There is no question of replacing Mr. Yeltsin. The president is in charge. There is no indication so far that he cannot carry out his duties," presidential spokesman Igor Igatyev said Thursday.

The sudden illness has ruled out a visit to China scheduled for Nov. 9 to 11 and may have dealt a blow to Russia's hopes of reasserting its role in Balkan diplomacy by staging a Bosnia summit in Moscow next Tuesday. A visit by Mr. Yeltsin to Norway is also in doubt.

The news also sent jitters through world markets, with the German mark, Russian debt prices and the rouble slipping. But the overall market reaction was restrained and some traders even suggested Mr. Yeltsin's departure would clear the air in Moscow.



A woman keeps vigil over the bodies of her relative and a seven-day-old baby killed in a suspected Tamil Tiger massacre of 24 civilians in the remote Sri Lankan hamlet of Henthalmillewa (AFP photo)

U.S. rules out troop cuts in Japan; NATO team in Bosnia

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary William Perry ruled out reducing U.S. troop levels in Japan but said Wednesday he was open to suggestions for ways to make the American presence there "more congenial" to local civilians.

In an interview with news agency reporters, Mr. Perry said he would be taking specific proposals to Tokyo next week on how to defuse a growing crisis over the U.S. troop presence in Okinawa, which hosts the bulk of American forces in Japan.

Sentiment in Okinawa has been inflamed by the Sept. 4 rape of a 12-year-old Okinawan schoolgirl allegedly by two U.S. Marines and a sailor. Thousands of Okinawans protested against the U.S. military last weekend.

Mr. Perry, speaking in his Pentagon office, said he would consider changing the kinds of exercises U.S. troops perform on Okinawa and other adjustments "to make it more congenial to the people who live in the proximity of our bases."

But he was firm in saying the overall size of the U.S. force in Japan would not be cut. He said he saw no sense in changing the number of American troops in any of the three key Asian posts: South Korea, Okinawa and Japan proper. It is the Clinton administration's policy to maintain 100,000 troops in Asia.

"I have no intention, no prospect, of backing off that number," Mr. Perry said.

The United States has about 37,000 troops in Korea, 26,000 on Okinawa and about 20,000 elsewhere in Japan.

On another topic, Mr. Perry disclosed that a small NATO team had entered Bosnia in recent days to survey roads, bridges and other infrastructure. The purpose, he said, was to gain a better knowledge of the conditions that would face a NATO-led military force if, as planned, it was called on to enforce a Bosnia peace deal.

He said the NATO survey team included some Americans. He gave no other details.

Mr. Perry reiterated his view that the United States should set a specific time limit, preferably one year, for keeping its peacekeepers in Bosnia. Many in the U.S. Congress have objected to this approach, which they say is politically driven by President Clinton's desire to have the troops out before the 1996 election.

Some in Congress have asserted that setting a deadline for a U.S. pullout would encourage the Bosnian Serbs to wait before violating the peace accord, but Mr. Perry rejected that argument.

De Klerk: Minority protection should continue

WORCESTER, South Africa (AFP) — Power sharing which protects South Africa's different groups should continue as a permanent feature of the country's political system in the next century, the leader of the conservative National Party (NP) Frederik De Klerk said.

Mr. De Klerk, speaking to journalists during campaigning in this wine-producing town in the Western Cape province for South Africa's first democratic local government elections, said the prospect of full majority rule frightens domestic and international investors.

Mr. De Klerk is currently the junior deputy president in the coalition government led by President Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) which won 61 per cent of the votes in last year's historic all-race election.

South Africa's interim constitution, which expires in 1999, entitles the former ruling NP to the deputy presidential position and six of the other 29 cabinet seats and other special provisions known as "sunset clauses" in proportion to its support.

Legislators are currently working on a new constitution which will come into force after the current one lapses.

Mr. De Klerk, whose support base consists largely of whites, Asians and people of mixed race known as coloureds, has often rejected what he calls "winner takes all" politics which would see the instalment of a government exclusively representing the black majority.

"If by 1999 we can develop a system which gives protection to minorities ... then we can create a climate of stability", Mr. De Klerk said.

Sri Lankan rebels said to resist army offensive

COLOMBO (Agencies) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas were fiercely resisting a major military thrust in their northern Jaffna stronghold despite pounding by the Sri Lankan army's big guns and air strikes, residents and rebels said Friday.

Troops on Operation Sunshine can't advance because of heavy resistance by the Tigers," said a Jaffna resident who arrived in Vavuniya, the northernmost town under government control.

"The army is shelling the area day and night," he said.

Both the army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had suffered heavy losses but those on the army's side, especially in equipment, were higher, he said.

The army says more than 500 rebels had been killed and 1,500 wounded in the army's latest and biggest offensive in Jaffna, launched 10 days ago to recapture control of the peninsula.

Army spokesman Sarath Munasinghe said the rebels, unable to face the advancing army in the north, were withdrawing in disarray and making diversionary attacks on villagers in the east and on Colombo in a desperate bid to ward off the assault.

The rebels were summoning reinforcements from other theatres of the war while hospitals in the north were full of their wounded, he said.

Survivors said the guerrillas massacred 24 Sinhalese villagers Thursday in a raid on remote hamlets in north-eastern Weli Oya, the fifth of its kind since Saturday.

Weli Oya lies at the heart of the conflict, lodged between government and Tiger controlled areas, where Sinhalese villages are under threat from the LTTE, fighting for an independent Tamil homeland in the north and the east.

The government says more than 50,000 people have died in the 12-year war.

The rebels killed 90 mostly Sinhalese villagers, including babies, in raids in the east and northeast at the weekend. The rebels have not admitted responsibility for the attacks.

Rebel suicide squads blew up the island's two main oil depots in the capital Colombo in a daring raid Friday.

Army sources said the army had lost 126 soldiers and had more than 500 wounded in the bitter fighting which brought troops to within eight kilometres of Jaffna City.

The LTTE said in a statement Friday that the army rained thousands of mortars and artillery shells into the Neerveli area, but rebel fighters had held firm.

The rebels earlier said they had blown up three armoured vehicles. The army said only the vehicles were damaged.

Brig. Munasinghe insisted the troops had captured Neerveli the previous day.

Jaffna residents said thousands of people displaced by the fighting were streaming across the lagoon from Jaffna to Kilinochchi, on the mainland where the rebels have built an alternative command centre and hospital if Jaffna fell.

They also said the 16 people were killed when air force jets bombed Jaffna City Thursday.

Brig. Munasinghe said maximum possible precautions were taken to avoid civilian casualties in the offensive and that the military regretted any accidental wounding of civilians.

Army officers say the offensive was breaking the guerrillas' grip on the Jaffna peninsula, depriving them of a recruiting ground and access to hospital.

The rebels run a virtual mini-state in Jaffna, with their own courts, police and civil administration.

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga told Friday's New York Times that government troops were near a decisive battle with Tamil rebels.

"This is the biggest offensive against the Tigers that any Sri Lankan government has ever undertaken," she said in the interview, referring to the military push in the northern Jaffna peninsula.

The next few days will be "very critical" to the country's 13-year civil war, she added.

"We still believe that the only possible final solution to the problem is a negotiated political settlement," Mrs. Kumaratunga said, "but as the Tigers are not willing to accept that situation, and as they have compelled us into a war, we believe that we should wage the war efficiently."

She said she believed the guerrilla organisation had lost public support and was showing serious splits for the first time, with several hundred rebels having defected to the government side recently.

"We believe that the break has begun to come," said the president, who was interviewed Wednesday in New York where she was attending the 50th anniversary of the United Nations.

Meanwhile the clandestine radio station of Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger guerrillas has been off the air for nearly six days and may have been hit during the military offensive, Tamil sources said Friday.

The LTTE have not transmitted their regular twice daily news bulletins since the start of the week when the army escalated their campaign against the rebels, the sources said.

The Voice of Tigers radio was believed to have operated from the small town of Neerveli in the northern peninsula of Jaffna where there had been intense artillery exchanges and air force attacks.

Canada's future hangs in balance in Quebec vote

MONTREAL (R) — The future of a united Canada hung in the balance Thursday as politicians campaigned furiously to sway undecided voters in the final days before Quebec votes on whether to break away.

Only weeks ago Quebec nationalists looked likely to suffer a crushing defeat in the Oct. 30 referendum, but the battle has been transformed into an emotional fight that has bitterly divided the country.

Two new public opinion polls put the separatists slightly in the lead among undecided voters. A crop poll released late Wednesday put the gap at 44.5 to 42.2 per cent and an Angus Reid survey released Thursday afternoon put the gap wider, at 44 to 40 per cent for the separatists.

Both polling agencies said the race was still too close to call. Crop said 13 per cent remained undecided and Angus Reid put the figure at 16 per cent.

"However, despite the tightness of the race, it is clear that the momentum of the campaign favours the yes (separatist) option," Angus Reid's senior vice president, John Wright, told a conference call organised by Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce.

The Canadian dollar suffered through another volatile day on the market, initially strengthening as some investors bet that support for separation had peaked, but falling later on the Angus Reid poll results.

Investors are worried that separation would disrupt flows of money and trade throughout North America.

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien repeated Thursday his warning that a vote for separation would plunge Canada into chaos.

"It's a plunge in the dark," Mr. Chretien said in an interview on the main private French-language television network in Quebec. "Nobody could predict what would happen."

On Wednesday evening he had pleaded with Quebec's five million voters during a nationally televised address to think long and hard before casting their ballots.

Leaning toward the camera, his voice cracking with emotion, Mr. Chretien asked Quebec voters: "Do you really think it is worth abandoning the country we have built and which our ancestors have left us? Do you really think it makes any sense — any sense at all — to break up Canada?"

Separatist leader Lucien Bouchard launched an angry attack on Mr. Chretien, accusing him of treachery against Quebec in helping patriate (transfer) the Canadian constitution from Britain in 1982 without Quebec's assent.

Mr. Bouchard held up a copy of the front page of a French-language newspaper from before the patriation showing Mr. Chretien, then the justice minister, laughing, under a banner headline which said that he and former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau had "betrayed" Quebec.

The constitution as patriated failed to enshrine special protection for the French language and culture — the so-called "distinct society" clause. Quebec is the only province not to have consented to the constitution.

Quebec voted 60-40 per cent against separation in 1980 and polls a few weeks ago predicted the nationalists would suffer a similar defeat this time, perhaps ending for a generation any hope of an independent Quebec.

But over the Canadian Thanksgiving Holiday weekend in early October, charismatic separatist Bouchard effectively seized control of the nationalist campaign and galvanised supporters with speeches appealing to pride in the French language and culture.

He and Quebec separatist Premier Jacques Parizeau are asking supporters to go out and find undecided voters and convince them to vote for a separate Quebec.

Mr. Chretien and thousands of Canadians, alarmed by the separatist wave, are desperately trying to turn the tide.

Tens of thousands of Canadians jammed airlines, trains, buses and roads to rush to Montreal for a massive unity rally Friday, which Mr. Chretien was expected to address.

Meanwhile times have changed radically since 1967 when General Charles De Gaulle shouted "vive le Quebec libre" (long live free Quebec) in Montreal and France is now ultra-cautious in talking about possible independence for Canada's French-speaking province.

Although a disciple of the historic French leader, current President Jacques Chirac was quick to distance himself this week from reports that he had endorsed the views of separatists seeking sovereignty in Quebec's referendum Monday.

Asked in a U.S. television interview if France was prepared to recognise a new Quebec government if Quebecers voted to separate from the rest of Canada, Mr. Chirac said:

"If the referendum (is) positive — the government will recognise the facts".

Mr. Bouchard welcomed the remark and called it "a clear and firm position" in support of sovereignty for Quebec days ahead of Monday's referendum.

Recognising the potential for a diplomatic incident, Mr. Chirac's spokeswoman Catherine Colonna said the president's traditional position of "non-interference" in Canada's internal affairs.

"He did not use the word 'recognise' in reference to independence," Ms. Colonna said. "He said only that if the referendum were positive, he would recognise the facts."

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الشركة الأردنية لخدمات الهواتف المتنقلة

PROVIDING CELLULAR COMMUNICATION FOR THE MENA ECONOMIC SUMMIT

Jordan Times

Independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1974

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Duty towards globalism

IN HIS MESSAGE to the Jordan Times on the occasion of the newspaper's 20th anniversary, the Crown Prince quoted the 17th century French "homme de lettres," Duc de la Rochefoucauld: "Celui qui croit pouvoir se passer de tout le monde se trompe, mais celui qui croit qu'on ne peut se passer de lui se trompe d'avantage," which if roughly translated means: "Those who believe they can do without the world deceive themselves, but those who believe the world cannot do without them, deceive themselves even more."

The message, properly understood, signifies the mutual need of the individual towards society and towards the rest of the world. The emphasis of the mutual, however, slants in favour of the world.

The timely message advocates the philosophy of global awareness, the pursuit of sharing across continents, an interdependency of nations. Individuals cannot do without interaction with the rest of the world. The world nevertheless will continue to revolve, even without the aid of that elusive individual member of the society, the message says; but will that individual hop on the speeding train in time?

The nation-states, the 183 members of the U.N., among them the powerful and the meek, need to realise that their survival individually and collectively depends so much on their common endeavour to make life more endurable for everyone.

Globalism is an ultimate goal. As the world, in effect, grows smaller through communication technology, we find ourselves increasingly bound to the task of better harvesting our needs and spreading them worldwide. The task is also a reciprocal one. The rest of the world has to speak to us. And for that purpose, we increasingly feel we have a duty to work towards bringing integration at the regional level in closer contact. We are reminded of where we stand at present at our socio-political stations and we are aware of how much in need we are of this comprehensive integration, the need for cross-boundary dialogue. We are indeed part of this global village. Our presence may never be felt in it, or may be felt only fleetingly, but nevertheless, the need is there to strive for the uppermost ideals and to voice the common thought.

La Rochefoucauld's penetrating cynicism in many of his epigrams is an apt quality that even today reflects on human nature's frustrated attempt to make our world a better place to live in.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i Arabic daily bitterly criticised the U.S. Congress for voting to move the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, saying that this move was a major offence dealt to the Arab and Muslim Nation. Munes Razzaz said that the decision should remind the Arab states that Washington can in no way abandon its Zionist ally in the region, however, hard the Arabs tried to be friendly to America and protect its interests. Indeed, he said, had the U.S. Congress thought that the American interests in the Middle East would be jeopardised by this decision, it would not have taken the vote but it knows for sure that the Arabs would not show any hostile reaction to Washington's decision, added the writer. He pointed, however, that despite some of the Arab states' protests, and lead to violence like the case in France, which is now victim to desperate forces coming from Algeria. The writer said that despair among the Arabs and Muslims could drive the desperate and frustrated people to move their violent acts to the United States, where they can take revenge on that nation that has shown and practiced hostility towards them.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour proposed that the government order schools and public institutions closed during the Middle East and North Africa summit (MENA), which will be held in Amman Sunday, to avoid many headaches and traffic jams. However hard the traffic department tries to avoid the congestion due to the diversions on the roads, it would not succeed in preventing serious jams not due to any fault on the part of the traffic department but because of the nature of the streets and the situation which will arise due to the presence of a large number of security men with their vehicles to ensure security during the conference, said Mohammad Subeithi. The writer said that any breakdown of any car on the side roads during the conference would no doubt cause a major traffic jam and a disturbing confusion for the students, the public and private sector employees going into or coming out from the seclusion zone. He said that the new arrangements on the roads will no doubt cause delays in the arrival of employees and the school students to and from home.

Getting in gear for a stronger regional role

JORDAN THIS week hosts one of the most important events that the Middle East ever saw: a three-day conference that brings together senior officials and business leaders representing 63 countries from all over the globe who will explore possibilities of business created in the wake of peace agreements signed by Israel and the Palestinians and Israel and Jordan.

In any event, we hope to witness during the three days of meetings of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference here the birth of regional cooperation and all that it entails against the backdrop of peace between Arabs and Israel. Some aspects of such cooperation may have to wait, given the absence of Syria and Lebanon, but that should not be a dissuading factor for anyone to seek means to exploit the full potential of the region while leaving room open for the absentees to turn up somewhere down the road.

It is premature to assess what lies in store for Jordan at the summit in terms of concrete moves that would help Jordanians realise the dividends of peace. Hopefully, there will be a minimum level of materialising projects at the

summit, and then it is largely up to our private sector and its counterparts from the 63 countries represented here to negotiate and reach agreements.

Beyond the economic aspect of the conference, the fact that it is hosting the summit is politically very symbolic for Jordan. Could anyone have imagined three years ago that Jordan would host such a gathering, given the isolation that we faced in the wake of the Gulf crisis? We owe it to our leadership to have charted the right course and guided us through some of the most troubled waters that a nation could ever find itself in. Not only Jordan steered itself through the troubled waters but has also managed to raise itself to the level of a key regional player whose advice, opinion and influence would continue to be sought by the international community.

As to the sceptics, whether in Jordan or elsewhere, who have been predicting all along that nothing good is coming out of the peace process, the MENA conference should be a resounding message that the region and the international community are serious about doing something good indeed for the people of the region.

On an inter-Arab level, the most significant aspect of the summit is the participation of all the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as a clear indication of not only of their interest in regional economic cooperation but also a message of improved relations with Jordan per se.

In this context, there are strong signs that the role of the Saudi-led GCC in the summit will be quite impressive. The project presentations by at least two GCC countries, Oman and Qatar, reflect the strength of the GCC role.

The recent meeting the King held with Saudi Deputy Prime Minister Prince Sultan Ben Sultan and the impending visit to Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal are two other events that should reaffirm the returning warmth of Saudi-Jordanian relations.

All told, Jordan and Jordanians have every reason to be proud of playing host to the MENA summit and seeking to assume a stronger regional role in socio-political-economic development of the region.

Jordanian writers celebrate the Jordan Times on its 20th anniversary

How a good paper wins its own freedom

By Dr. Fahed Al Fanek

Al Ra'i

Al Ra'i sister daily, the Jordan Times, the only English language daily, in Jordan, today celebrates its 20th anniversary, concluding 20 years in the service of Jordan and in the pursuit of the truth.

The Jordan Times has distinguished itself from the other local Arabic dailies in the country because it has consistently striven to raise the ceiling of freedom of the press even during the martial law years when the press was subjected to arbitrary measures by some governments.

The Jordan Times has proved throughout the past two decades that freedom of the press is a daily practice that is not granted but rather is won by one's own initiative and that true journalists can determine their own ceiling.

Not only has the Jordan Times proved itself to be a credible source of information for the international community in Jordan — the businessmen and tourists — but it has also proved to be a reliable resource to many Jordanians who find in it news and views that are lacking in the other Jordanian dailies.

The Jordan Times serves as a living evidence that a newspaper's influence, status and respect do not only depend on its circulation. It is true that the circulation figures of the Jordan Times are not massive yet its influence far exceeds its sales. It is enough for one to

gleam through any foreign language publication on Jordan to find that the Jordan Times had served as a major source of reference for its materials. Indeed, it can be described as national book of records.

In reflecting on such achievements by the Jordan Times one can only attribute its success over the years to two men: Rami Khouri who served as editor in the early years and George Hawatmeh who took over and still in editor of the daily. Both men can be described as professional journalists whose contributions and dedicated efforts made and continue to make the daily a model of highly refined journalism and a school that turned out men and women journalists currently serving as Amman correspondents for reputed world media organisations.

I have had the honour of contributing to the Jordan Times a weekly column for the past 12 years. That column, which never fails to draw reactions and feedback from readers, has also put on top of the list of those people whom foreign journalists seek to meet and interview when visiting the country and gathering facts for their articles and reports.

This is a testimony to the fact that a good newspaper is what makes and comes a good writer and not vice versa.

The Jordan Times has not only served Jordan but also contributed to the profession of journalism in Jordan and imbued it with credibility. On its anniversary, its staff truly deserve the warmest of congratulations.

Impressive approach

Al Mashreq weekly

We celebrate with our colleagues in the Jordan Times the 20th anniversary of an English language daily that for two decades has been Jordan's window on the outside world.

For non-Arabic speakers the Times has been their only means to read about what goes on in this country. As for us, Arabic-language speakers, we always enjoy reading a newspaper that has carved for itself a

wider margin of freedom that distinguishes it from the other three Arabic dailies.

We are impressed by the Jordan Times' democratic and liberal approach in selecting and processing news and views. We are also grateful for the newspaper for its contribution to recruiting and preparing a generation of professional journalists whose work now is symbolic of the great potential in the country.

Best wishes from Al Dustour

We congratulate our colleagues in the Jordan Times on the paper's 20th

anniversary. We wish the Jordan Times and its staff progress and prosperity.

Unique performance

Al Aswaq Newspaper

The Jordan Times, which celebrates its 20th anniversary, has retained its unique performance as the only English language daily over the past years. The paper has truly reflected the country's national message to the world in various areas and at the same time turned out many journalists

currently serving in prominent positions in the public and private sector and the media. Indeed, the Jordan Times has become through its dedication, daring coverage of events and relentless efforts a pioneer among the Arab media and a school training and then turning out efficient journalists to serve in many other areas of the world of media.

20th Anniversary

A step ahead

By Abdullah Hjami

Al Ra'i

The Jordan Times has exerted serious and continuous efforts over the past 20 years, serving the nation and the readers and developing alongside with the Kingdom in many different ways. The topics covered by the daily continue to be of real interest to the readers, presented in an objective and daring manner. We in Al Ra'i daily lived with the Jordan Times since its birth, greatly admiring the efforts of its staff, who have succeeded in transforming the four-page daily into a 12-page newspaper of a very high standard. Indeed the staff of the English language daily exert much more efforts in producing this relatively small size daily than the whole of the Al Ra'i staff producing many times more pages. This fact increases our admiration for the Jordan Times team

who work in a unique unison and skill and are envied by the staff of the other dailies in town. It is true that Al Ra'i daily has made major strides rising to levels on equal footing with other world daily papers, but we have felt that the Jordan Times was always a step ahead of us in terms of journalistic performance and excellence. We have always looked with admiration and respect at the staff of the Jordan Times, not because they have an edge over us in view of their fluency in English but because they were really unique in their work and enjoy qualifications seldom found in other newspapers. By celebrating the anniversary, we feel that the Jordan Times has become a basic element of the daily life of a large sector of the population and we wish its staff continued success.

Newspaper that can go regional

By Tareq Masarweh

Al Ra'i

The Jordan Times, which celebrates its 20th anniversary, can be rightly described as the best among the English language dailies published in the Arab World, serving not only the local public but foreign companies, diplomatic missions and foreign media. Had it been given more freedom in dealing with pan-Arab affairs, the Jordan Times would have risen to the level of the reputable American and British press long time ago. The Jordan Times had turned out highly qualified journalists who now fill important positions in the foreign media. Being colleagues to the journalists of the Jordan Times working

to Al Ra'i daily we highly appreciate the journalistic efforts of the paper's Editor George Hawatmeh and his team. The management of the Jordan Press Foundation, publishers of the Al Ra'i and the Jordan Times, need to allocate more funds for the English language daily and boost the efforts of its staff, and so help the newspaper retain its highly qualified staff, many of whom have over the years sought work elsewhere. Having had training at the Jordan Times they, those journalists naturally excelled in other areas too, earning for themselves better income. The Jordan Times, which had proved its excellence in the past 20 years is quite capable of faring better in the media world in the years to come.

A credible newspaper

By Sultan Al Hattab

Al Ra'i

From the very start, the Jordan Times has succeeded in speaking the language of the foreign nationals and presenting its objective and concise local and

international news. The staff of the Jordan Times have always avoided rhetoric and many of the nonsense that is often found in the Arab dailies. Acting with a greater measure of freedom, the Jordan Times insisted not to be a carbon copy of the local Arabic

dailies and has succeeded in rising to the standard acceptable by the foreign media and the foreign nationals who read it. Indeed the Jordan Times took the lead in tackling topics which were taboo in the Arabic press, which timidly followed in its

footsteps at a later stage. The Jordan Times has won credibility and many friends and a large readership to the extent that many Jordanians now consider it as their main newspaper, because its service to the country has been invaluable and immeasurable indeed.

A story of growth and success

By Ahmad Al Misleh

Al Ra'i

THE 20TH anniversary of the Jordan Times coincides with the silver jubilee of its sister publication Al Ra'i daily. The Jordan Times has matured after overcoming numerous obstacles and hardships and after growing from four to six to eight and later to 12 pages. What

characterises this pretty young and vigorous newspaper are its daring articles and analysis which won it the admiration of readers in Jordan and many parts of the world. The Jordan Times has developed over the years, charming its readers with its performance and deserving 20 beautiful roses for its 20 beautiful years.

A pioneer in the Arab media

By Sameer Hiari

Al Ra'i

THE STAFF of Al Ra'i daily envy their colleagues in the Jordan Times because of the higher ceiling of freedom they enjoy and practice. It is true that our chief, Abu Azmi, gives us some freedom in choosing the stories that we write and publish but many times he censors our articles which could easily find their way into the Jordan

Times. In word and deed, the Jordan Times has become the first newspaper in Jordan with its unique performance, which truly serves the country and its people and reflects a good image to the outside world. The Jordan Times has won for itself numerous friends, especially among the paper's colleagues in Al Ra'i daily. We congratulate each and every one of them on their achievements.

Twenty years of achievement

By Dr. Majdi Sabri

THE JORDAN Times has always been special to me because of an early personal experience which I immensely enjoyed.

My association with Jordan Times dates back to 1980, when I used to write a weekly column primarily on economic issues. For more than a year, I also edited the Economy page, which gave me a memorable experience and an invaluable insight into the world of journalism. The few hours that I used to spend at the Jordan Times every week were very enjoyable as I was introduced to an overwhelmingly friendly atmosphere of professional journalism and efficient teamwork.

The Jordan Times today stands out among the rest as probably the best Eng-

lish language newspaper in the Arab World. It also competes successfully with Jordanian daily newspapers and most of the time is ahead some of them in covering local stories. It became a major source of information to the outside world and its well-read editorial usually reflects the general mode of the country. It provided Jordanians and others with an open forum to discuss various issues freely and responsibly, and gained a lot of respect in various quarters because of its credibility and responsible attitude.

During the past two decades, the newspaper developed itself fairly steadily. It is now covering a wider spectrum of activities and areas of interest. However, as an economist, I would like to

see a more comprehensive coverage of Jordan's economic and financial issues.

Jordan Times editors, correspondents and writers are now more experienced and they continue to hold the same pioneering spirit which was initiated by Rami Khouri and later carried forward by George Hawatmeh.

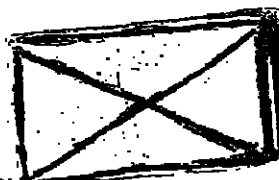
The Jordan Times family should look back with pride at their 20 years of achievements. I congratulate every one of them on this happy occasion and wish them further success for many years to come.

The writer is RJ executive vice president for marketing and sales.

Khasawneh denies 'Izvestia' account

AMMAN (J.T.) — Dr. Hani Khasawneh, a former minister of information, has denied that he ever told the Jordan Times' editors that they had to view their newspaper as another Izvestia (a Soviet newspaper that served as the government mouthpiece during the communist era).

"I visited the Jordan Times' offices in 1988 and met with the editors for an informal conversation," he said in a telephone statement in response to an article that appeared in the 20th anniversary issue of Thursday. "Nowhere during that conversation did I mention the word Izvestia," he said, without elaborating on the substance of the "conversation" with the editors, who have their own account of the encounter.



Summit loaded with discussions, presentation of projects and business opportunities

By Francesca Ciriaci

Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein will inaugurate the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit tomorrow with the participation of world leaders and high-ranking officials, diplomats and businessmen.

The international inauguration will take place at the Palace of Culture at the Sports City at 11:00 a.m. The opening plenary session, introduced and moderated by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, will start at 11:15 and will be marked by the speeches from His Royal Highness Crown Prince Sidi Mohammed of Morocco, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Andrei Kozyrev.

Also Yasser Arafat, president of the Palestine National Authority (PNA); Yitzhak Rabin, prime minister of Israel; Javier Solana, president of the Council of Ministers of the European Union; Amr Musa, minister of foreign affairs of Egypt; Andrei Oulet, minister of foreign affairs of Canada; and Yasuo Fukuda, vice minister of fore-

ign affairs of Japan will deliver speeches.

A speech by Klaus Schwab, founder and president of the World Economic Forum (WEF), which has organized the conference, will conclude the opening plenary session.

Later Sunday, at 5:30 p.m., a second plenary session about "the role of the international community in supporting the economic underpinnings of peace-building" will be held at the Palace of Culture, in the Sports City, moderated by Crown Prince Hassan. Ministers of foreign affairs from the UAE, Sweden, India, China and Tunisia and state ministers from Australia, Poland, Brazil, Finland and Bulgaria are also registered as speakers in this session.

At the same time, thematic discussions in parallel will be held at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) and Regency Palace Hotel.

The schedule for Monday, the second day of the conference, is particularly busy. In the early morning Oct. 30, a networking breakfast with experts and media leaders is scheduled at the Inter-Con-

tinental Hotel. A precious occasion for businessmen to meet their counterparts from all over the world, exchange views and business cards.

The morning will continue with a plenary session moderated by Basel Jaraneh, minister of finance of Jordan, about "the economic climate," at the Palace of Culture. Stanley Fischer, first managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Jassim Al Mammari, director-general of the Arab Monetary Fund, will deliver speeches.

After the plenary session, there will be project presentations in parallel: The Jordan Rift Valley development plan and "the multi-lateral peace process: Forging a partnership for business." The busy schedule of Monday morning will also include thematic discussions in parallel and will end up with a choice of nine different country lunches.

Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, PNA, Qatar, and Jordan will submit their list of projects in the evening session that starts at 3:30 p.m. A plenary session about "trade and industry" at the

ministerial level will be held from 17:30 to 19:30 at the Palace of Culture.

The next day, Tuesday, projects will be exchanged over breakfast at the Inter-Continental Hotel, to give businessmen a further opportunity to discuss possibilities for joint ventures, partnerships and cooperation. Another plenary session, opening at 9:00 a.m. at the Palace of Culture, will be dedicated to "infrastructure."

The Tuesday's project presentations, which will start at 11:00 a.m., will deal with business and regional cooperation in the Middle East, as presented by the Regional Economic Development Working Group (REDWG). The second part of project presentations for Jordan and Israel will be held at RCC, and Regency Palace respectively at 11:00 a.m.

Also, at the same time, four industry workshops about financial services, food and agro, textiles and apparel, and transportation will take place at the RCC in different rooms.

After the industry workshop lunches, the programme

for the day continues at 3:00 p.m. with project presentations by Egypt, Tunisia, and PNA. The Gulf of Aqaba development plan will also be submitted at the same time at the RCC. Speakers from Brussels, Germany, Jordan and Egypt are expected to intervene at the session moderated by David Broder, director-general at the Israeli Ministry of Finance.

Other industry workshops will also be held at the RCC in the evening. The closing session, due at the Palace of Culture at 18:45, will see the signing ceremony on institutional structures related to regional economic cooperation.

Pre-registration for participants who arrive early will be accepted today (Saturday) at the Inter-Continental Hotel from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Special shuttle transport from hotels to the Inter-Continental Hotel as well as to all other locations of the summit's meetings during the three-day economic international conference will be available.

Plenary sessions will be interpreted in Arabic, English and French.

IMF predicts Middle East economic integration to start

WASHINGTON (AP) — A high-level government and business meeting that opens Sunday in Amman, will launch a new body to bring together the economies of the Middle East, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has predicted.

"It's likely there will be some announcement in Amman... that they will begin to work concretely towards setting up a Middle East development bank and that at same time they'll get it going with something less ambitious just to make sure that work is actually done on regional integration," said Stanley Fischer, the No. 2 man at the fund.

Many details are still undecided, Mr. Fischer told a news conference, but he believed the meeting would go ahead on the bank — a controversial undertaking, with opposition both in countries of the region and some outside which would be expected to take part.

He said it might take two years to set up the bank. He cautioned that whatever is set up would not bear fruit at once but that any such bank would lend money, not just technical aid.

Mr. Fischer foresaw a big role for the private sector in such a Middle East bank.

One proposal, he said, would be to begin with most of the capital coming from outside of the region but with the balance eventually shifting to money from the region itself.

He said a large outside participation would be a reassurance to people who deal

with the bank. A way should be found, he said, to insure that outside participation continues. He added that in the case of the bank set up to help the countries of eastern Europe after the Soviet collapse — the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development — many governments jumped in at the start but their interest faded a few months later.

He pointed out that the oil-rich countries of the Middle East have largely invested their money outside the region.

"If three to four per cent of the portfolios held by the region were shifted into the region, it would make a big difference to the development prospects of quite a few countries," Mr. Fischer said.

He said a large outside participation would be a reassurance to people who deal

Rabin wants EU free trade for peace partners

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin Friday pushed for the European Union (EU) to reward the Jewish state's peace partners Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians with free trade agreements.

But Mr. Rabin, in a meeting with the EU delegation, slammed Syria for blocking "openness... in the Arab World toward Israel."

"Israel has free trade agreements with the European Union but there is no such agreement between the EU and Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians," Mr. Rabin was quoted by a statement issued by his office as telling the delegation.

"The prime minister requested the Troika ministers examine this issue in order that all of the other partners

in the region in the peace process can enjoy the fruits of peace," it said.

Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana, whose country holds the EU's rotating chair, made no comment after meeting Mr. Rabin in Tel Aviv. After later talks with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in occupied Jerusalem, he told a news conference.

"It is an important visit... we feel committed to the development of the Middle East."

Jordan, Israel sign agricultural agreement

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and Israel on Thursday signed an agreement paving the ground for cooperation in agricultural fields and facilitating the exchange of agricultural products.

Under the terms of the agreement, which was signed by Minister of Agriculture Mansour Ben Tarif and his Israeli counterpart Yaqoub Tsour, the two sides will exchange expertise and organize spraying campaigns and hold joint seminars and training courses as well as exhibitions pertaining to agriculture.

They also agreed to carry out joint efforts to induce rain, carry out agricultural research programmes and to give Jordan preferential treatment whenever Israel is in need of fresh products which will be exempted from any customs fees.

The agreement exempted specific Jordanian products sold to Israel from customs duty like olive oil, sheep, goats, meat, white boiled cheese, fruits and vegetables. It also gave Jordan the right to choose the sorts of agricultural products it wishes to import from Israel.

Israel has pledged to facili-

tate the import of Jordanian agricultural exports to the Palestine self-rule areas and agreed to join Jordan in setting up joint agricultural projects and to form a committee to meet annually to follow up the implementation of the agreement and overcome any obstacles impeding it.

At the outset of the signing ceremony held in the Jordan Valley, Mr. Ben Tarif delivered an address underlining the importance of the deal which he said provides for fruitful cooperation between Jordan and Israel in the exchange of expertise, useful information and agriculture related technology especially in combating pests and opens the way for Jordan to export its products to Israeli markets.

Jordan has made major strides in the production of vegetables, fruits, milk products, eggs and poultry meat and has surplus of these commodities which can find their way to Israeli markets, said the minister.

The Israeli minister said that the agreement will serve as a basis for future cooperation in many agricultural fields.

Summit to strengthen peace process by promoting business

AMMAN (J.T.) — Gregory Blatt and Frederic Sire, members of the executive board of the World Economic Forum (WEF), on Thursday stressed the importance of bringing together leading businessmen and political decision-makers to strengthen the peace process in the region.

The Middle East North Africa (MENA) economic summit, an annual summit advancing economic development and cooperation in the region and creating new forms of partnerships between the public and private sectors, is the watershed event in the region. Mr. Blatt and Dr. Sire told a press conference that extensive influence of the summit, which identifies the issues facing the MENA region and creates strategies whose repercussions are felt positively here and abroad.

At the second MENA economic summit, some 1100 businessmen, 300 high-level representatives from governments, regional and international organizations, 50 experts and 550 journalists will meet for three days of intensive discussions in Amman Oct. 29-31.

Compared to the first MENA economic summit held in Casablanca, Morocco, at this time last year, the agenda of the meeting will be "more business-driven" said Mr. Blatt, "and the summit will produce even more tangible results."

The summit will focus on specific projects for economic development. Business leaders will make direct proposals to government leaders to improve the investment climate in the region. All participants have been invited to contribute to the project exchange, and individual governments will put forward specific projects during the three-day meeting.

To foster company-to-company matchmaking, the World Economy Forum has created a database and e-mail

system to help participants identify and contact potential business partners. Many business deals, including important contracts in the energy sector, are expected to be concluded during the summit.

Several current and future projects will be presented at the summit. Ministers of Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian (National) Authority will take the opportunity of the summit to present seven joint regional projects. In addition, Bahrain, Tunisia, Morocco and Qatar will present projects to the international business community. Finally, individual companies, including ENI, Amoco and Enron, will also present projects which are under development in the Gulf, Levant and Magreb.

HAND CRAFTED IN JORDAN NATURALLY. Since 1988



Amra Hotel Shops, Amman

JUMBLE
Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NIFET
GLARN
CHABLE
BRANEY

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: _____

(Answers Monday)

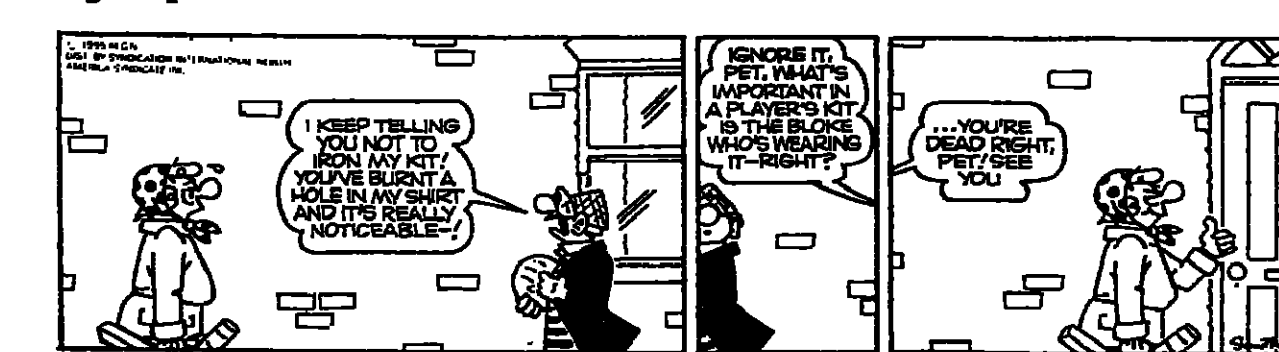
Yesterday's Jumbles: RAPID CHAFE FICKLE IMPUGN
Answer: Passengers can become this to certain cab drivers — FARE GAME

GUSSBERGEN

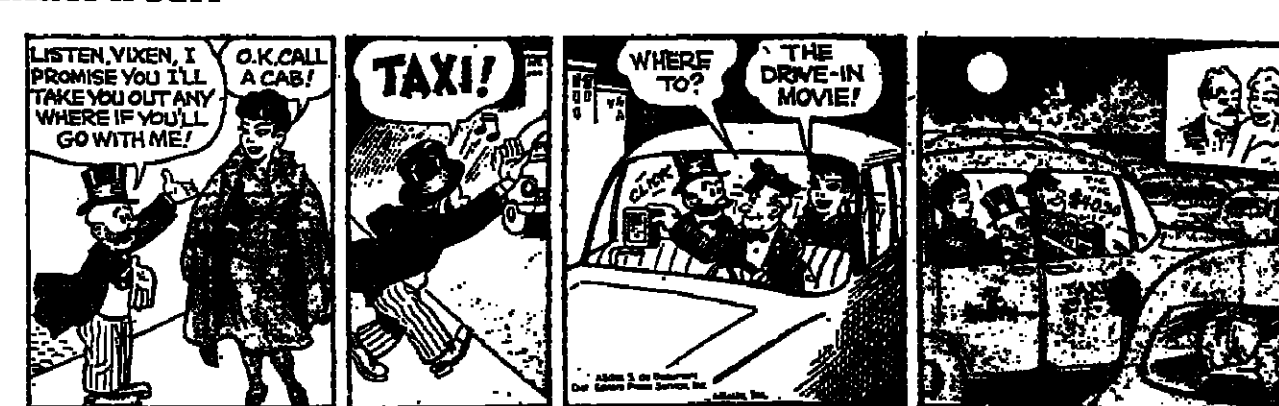
Peanuts



Andy Cap

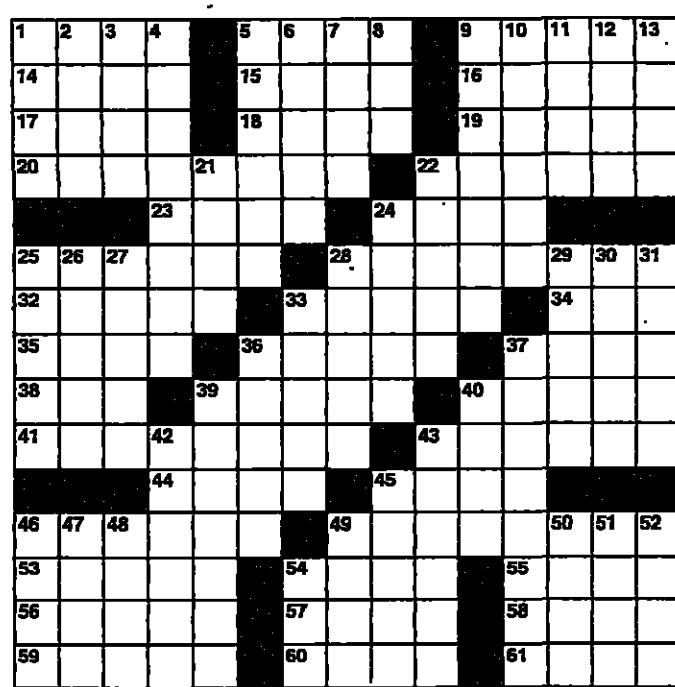


Mutt'n'Jeff

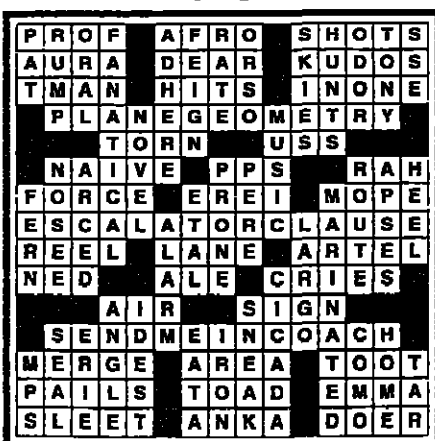


THE Daily Crossword by Virginia B. Hopewell

- ACROSS
- 1 Border: abbr.
 - 5 Meaningless talk
 - 9 Earth color
 - 14 Voyaging
 - 15 In unison, musically
 - 16 Pursuit
 - 17 Cans
 - 18 Certain worker, briefly
 - 19 Sacher —
 - 20 "Room —" (film)
 - 22 Kicked
 - 23 Beasts of burden
 - 24 Keep — on (watch)
 - 25 Appraised
 - 28 Veered
 - 32 Accumulate
 - 33 Aviator
 - 34 Hatchet
 - 35 London gallery
 - 36 Phones
 - 37 City on the Mediterranean
 - 38 Suffix with meteor
 - 39 Small cutting tools
 - 40 Wandered
 - 41 South Pacific arm
 - 43 Poor dwellings
 - 44 Portions of land
 - 45 European
 - 46 Property
 - 49 Left secretly
 - 53 Court decree
 - 54 Twaddle
 - 55 Be tedious
 - 56 Skin disease
 - 57 Feed the Kitty
 - 58 Yale students
 - 59 Guide
 - 60 Pay attention
 - 61 Upset



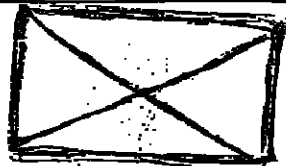
Thursday's puzzle solved



- DOWN
- 1 — Han
 - 2 Take it — comes
 - 3 Landlord's due
 - 4 Certain factory
 - 5 Stood at the plate

- 6 — a Grecian Um
- 7 Cesspool
- 8 Cognizant
- 9 Calendar word
- 10 Make a selection
- 11 Red deer
- 12 Punta del —
- 13 Bulrush or cattail
- 21 Former spouses
- 22 Reveals
- 24 Coin flip call
- 25 Prophetic
- 26 Senator
- Alphonse D' —
- 27 Subsequently
- 28 Barton or Bow
- 29 Unsophisticated
- 30 Surpass
- 31 Homeowner papers
- 33 Conflagrations
- 36 Like neglected furniture
- 37 Thanksgiving month

- 39 Desk mat
- 40 A Barrett
- 42 Declare
- 43 Chopped
- 45 AI — (spaghetti preference)
- 46 Batters
- 47 QED word
- 48 Eng. composer
- 49 Beach sight
- 50 Chukker game
- 51 Author Ambler
- 52 Escritoire
- 54 Scrooge word



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Astrological Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Be wise and get into the business world today and take care of whatever you have little time for during busy work day and need to be settled.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Go to new places and be with persons today who can assist you to get ahead faster at this time and later in the future.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a fine day today to study the monetary angles of whatever interests you have in mind for later this evening and in the future.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You can meet objective thinking persons today who can be of great assistance. It is best you're not to sensitive in order to gain help from them.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be more practical and get activities completed which are necessary, and forget about going off on a spree which will be unnecessary. Be more cooperative with fellow associates.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You can express yourself best at home so get busy today and make your abode more charming for close friends. Have a delightful time with them.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get out to whatever has to be completed in public which is difficult to handle during busy work days and take pals along with you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Make out important reports and statements today and show others what your true feelings are. Handle any travel difficulties which do develop.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is a good day for studying books or records and handling other practical affairs which require your attention to be completed properly.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You like to get all the facts of any situation straight and then you can handle them well. You should apply this to personal affairs.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Quietly plan how to be more practical in your personal affairs today and you will get the right results. Stop making promises you have no intention of fulfilling to the one you love.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Know what it is that friends want from you today and endeavour to please them, and you will be happier in your own heart for making them occur.

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

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Investors pin hopes on foreign capital to revive Amman Financial Market

By Saleman Al Khalidi

AMMAN—Amman's investors hope new laws will attract foreign funds needed to revive a stock market still unconvincing that Jordan's peace treaty with Israel will pay dividends.

Investors, awaiting a cabinet announcement this month that will ease limits on foreign ownership, think international funds could start to flow in by the end of this year.

A law earlier this month eliminated cumbersome case-by-case cabinet approval of foreign purchases.

The legal changes are timed to coincide with the economic summit on the Middle East and North Africa opening in Amman on Sunday, during which Jordan hopes to attract the interest of emerging market funds.

"From now until the end of the year there will be a turning point in the market as regards foreign investment that should show its results at the start of 1996," said Samih

Qamhawi, general manager of the Arab Financial Investment Company, a firm involved in long-term stock investment.

The Amman Financial Market index fell Tuesday to 158.07, above the 143.63 level when the peace treaty was signed on Oct. 25, 1994, but far off the record high of 181.63 in July 1993.

Foreign investment makes up only 4.2 per cent of the \$4.4 billion capitalised market of nearly 100 listed companies, little changed since the start of Middle East peace talks in 1991 despite 1993's market boom.

There has been foreign interest. More than 60 funds sought cabinet permission to invest a total of \$400 million and received approvals covering \$160 million in the two years until May 1994.

But a freeze on applications that month when the state began to overhaul investment rules caused many to delay purchases.

"It's a small market and any injection of liquidity will

show results quickly, and while there will be a sudden rise, the market will then be steady," Mr. Qamhawi said.

Mr. Qamhawi and other investors believe foreign funds could inject 300 million to 500 million dinars (\$423 million to \$704 million) over the next year.

However, even enthusiasts agree that foreign investment will be gradual, long-term and focused on large capitalised companies with healthy earnings in the official market.

There are also 32 mostly newly established companies in the primary market, where they trade for a year before moving to the official market, and nearly 50 new companies waiting to be listed.

Mohammad Tash, general manager of the brokerage firm National Securities Company, which has acted for many foreign funds, foresees "a gradual increase in the Jordanian equity market, with it reaching a good percentage of the total."

Mr. Tash says funds now waiting for the legal changes will spur activity next year. "The majority look at Jordan's market as a promising though small market, seeing opportunities to make good returns in allocating a percentage of their funds."

They will not disrupt the market by speculative activity, he added to calm fears of those who foresee overheating and volatility.

Emerging funds are already taking the bulk of the risk by simply choosing to invest in Jordan... they are risk-averse to speculate or be involved in sudden huge inflows or outflows of capital," Mr. Tash said.

Besides lack of foreign capital, many blame current problems on the absence of institutional buying due to a tight money policy that has curbed bank lending for stock purchases.

The policy has also made deposit yields more attractive than stock dividends.

"It's a tight liquidity market and the market is no

longer as attractive for banks because whatever they have of funds are given priority to meet the needs of financing loans," said Jawad Hadid, general manager of Jordan's Arab Banking Corporation.

The value of shares traded fell nearly 14 per cent in the first nine months of 1995 to 351 million dinars (\$494 million) from 406.7 million dinars (\$573 million) in the same period last year.

Fresh stock issues by established and new companies exceeding 240 million dinars (\$338 million) this year have also drawn down liquidity.

Investors complain that the Middle East peace process has so far failed to give the predicted impetus. But a year after Jordan made peace with Israel, Jordanian investors are optimistic that the climate may be changing.

"As long as the tangible results of the peace process that could bring positive economic benefits have not appeared, the market will remain undervalued," Mr. Hadid said.

Foreign investment at AFM may reach \$700m until '98

ACCORDING TO well-informed financial sources, an international fund called the Jordan Index Common Trust intends to invest \$12 million at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) over the coming three years. The sources indicated that many international investment funds will focus on investing at the AFM and the Tel Aviv stock exchange while other funds will seek other forms of investment in Jordan and Israel as well as other countries in the Middle East and North Africa. The sources expect foreign investment at the AFM to reach JD 500 million (\$700 million) during the coming three years noting that many international investment funds have contracted many banks and institutions in Jordan to invest large amounts at the AFM (Al Dustour).

Jordan could receive B.B or B credit rating

INFORMED SOURCES said Jordan could be receiving a credit rating of B.B or B from Moody's and Standard and Poor's, the world's top two credit rating institutions. Only Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Israel have credit rating in the region. Israel's rating is B.B.B. (Al Dustour).

Local banks reportedly sign 16 agreements

KNOWLEDGEABLE BANKING sources said that local banks in Jordan have signed agreements with 16 of the largest trust banks in the world to organise the flow of international capital to the AFM (Al Dustour).

Hamareh says sales tax opens door to price rises

ECONOMICS PROFESSOR Munir Hamareh said in a lecture that the sales tax will have a great impact on increasing prices. He explained that that does not mean a rise in prices only but opening permanent conditions to increase prices as we are suffering from various forms of continued price rises which lead to more people falling to poverty line. Dr. Hamareh pointed out that many economists have opposed this tax describing it as a tool hindering economic development under the present circumstances. He stressed

the need to support local production to counter higher costs, lower demand and heightened competition resulting from the increase in sales tax and the reduction in protection for local industries. Dr. Hamareh said the incentives given in the tax package would not boost investment in as much as the development of local technology in a good form (Al Dustour).

Businessmen issue publications

THE JORDANIAN Business Association has prepared a number of publications. Five of them fully cover all aspects of the national economy. The remaining publications are the second edition of the Companies Law in English, the directory for the Jordanian business community, the latest book on the business climate and investment in Jordan in English and a book containing a number of speeches by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan (Al Dustour).

Investments total \$700m since August 1994

A TOTAL of JD 548 million (approximately \$700 million) of investments were recorded by the Department of Investment Promotion at the Ministry of Industry and Trade since August 1994 until now, said Assem Hindawi, the department's director-general (Al Dustour).

324 firms invest JD 43.8m

THE CAPITAL of 324 companies which registered at the Ministry of Industry and Trade last month was JD 43.8 million, 7.2 per cent less than the amount during August when the capital invested by 383 companies was JD 47.2 million. The number of industrial companies which registered in September was 43 having a combined capital of JD 31.5 million while the number of commercial companies was 256 having a total capital of JD 7.8 million. Other companies which registered in September were one agricultural entity with a JD 4 million capital, six construction companies with a JD 202,000 in equity and 18 service institutions carrying a JD 256,000 in capital. In September of last year, a total of 49 industrial companies registered with a JD 37.2 million capital while the number of commercial companies was 173 with a capital of JD 3.5 million (Al Dustour).

Prices drop at AFM

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN—Prices dropped at the Amman stock market last week as investors sought liquidity on hopes that this week's economic conference in Amman would produce tangible foreign investment in the country to benefit local entities, brokers said Friday.

They said prices were deliberately depressed despite high enthusiasm that the Oct. 29-31 Middle East and North Africa economic conference would advance Jordanian hopes of multi-million dollar investments with American and European government support.

Contributing to the depression in the market were revelations that an American company which signed a \$120 million project for a recreation park at the Red Sea resort of Aqaba was a fake company with a capital of \$200, the brokers said.

The weekly report of the Amman Financial Market (AFM) said weekly turnover was 4.7 million dinars, down nearly five per cent from the previous week's 4.5 million dinars.

The report said 2.9 million shares changed hands during the week under 3,752 contracts. Average daily trading during the week was 940,000 dinars compared with the

previous week's 900,000 dinars.

Industrials accounted for 41.4 per cent of the week's trading with a volume of 1.96 million dinars, followed by banks with 1.89 million dinars, the services sector with 830,000 dinars and insurance stocks with 52,000 dinars, the report said.

The official AFM index closed for the week at 157.9 per cent, down 2.6 points, or 1.6 per cent, from the week's opening of 160.5 points.

Separate sectoral indices showed that industrials lost 1.8 per cent during the week, banks 1.6 per cent, services sector 1.8 per cent, and insurance 0.5 per cent.

The week saw shares of 88 companies changing hands. As trading closed for the week, 56 shipped and 16 remained unchanged.

Brokers said the depression in the market was almost deliberate since many investors sought liquidity to exercise their options depending on the outcome of the MENA economic conference that begins Sunday. Several billion dollars of projects, both in infrastructure and commercial opportunities, are expected to be presented.

"Everybody is hoping that agreement on financing some of the projects will be reached during the summit, and hence the frenzy to have liquidity," said a broker.

The broker said investors were also shocked by reports that an American company, "MAGIC World," which had signed a \$120 million recreation park project at Aqaba, could be fictitious and did not have finances to build the project.

"That sent shock waves through the business community despite government assurances that the agreement was not binding but was only a letter of intent," said the broker.

"Now everybody is looking for concrete signs of liquidity and financial status of any company that steps into the Jordanian scene."

SOS Village celebrates King's birthday

ON THE OCCASION of the 60th birthday of His Majesty King Hussein, and under the Patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, the SOS Children's Village Association of Jordan in cooperation with Alahia-Abela holds a drawing competition under the title "Hussein's Jordan: Year 2000". The association is inviting all children between the ages 5-14 to participate in this competition. The drawings should express the children's views of Jordan in the year 2000 under the care and love of His Majesty King Hussein.

Name, date of birth, address, and telephone number of all participants should be clearly written. Participation fee for each drawing is JD 1, in support of SOS Children in Jordan.

All drawings should be submitted to SOS representative at Alahia Abela between Oct. 28-Nov. 12, from 4-9 p.m., where they will be put on display, and should be done on either A4 or A3 size paper or cardboard.

Each participation enables its holder to receive a lottery ticket for 2 persons, for one week in Euro Disney, presented by the Toy-Shop at Alahia Abela.

Names of winners will be announced during a special festival held at Alahia Abela on Nov. 14, 1995, between 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Financial Markets		
in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank		
Daily Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin		
Currency	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	0.7882	0.7100
Swedish Krona	1.1195	1.1211
Deutsche Mark	0.5975	0.5104
Swiss Franc	0.6234	0.6665
French Franc	0.1444	0.1451
Japanese Yen	0.6971	0.7086
Dutch Guilder	0.4534	0.4557
Swedish Krona	0.0000	0.0000
Italian Lira	0.0436	0.0440
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000

Other Currencies

Currency	Buy	Sell
British Pound	1.8472	1.8784
Japanese Yen	0.043555	0.044250
South Riyal	0.1655	0.1698

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3680/90	Canadian dollar	1.3934/44
	1.3934/44	Deutschemarks	1.5620/30
	1.5620/30	Dutch guilders	1.1310/20
	28.65/69	Swiss francs	4.8787/37
	4.8787/37	Belgian francs	1591.7/3.2
	1591.7/3.2	French francs	101.30/40
	101.30/40	Italian lire	6.5730/30
	6.5730/30	Japanese yen	6.1750/00
	6.1750/00	Swedish crowns	5.4111/11
	5.4111/11	Norwegian crowns	1.4145/55
	1.4145/55	Danish crowns	0.7545/50
	0.7545/50	Singapore dollars	7.7330/40
	7.7330/40	Australian dollars	
		Hong Kong dollars	
One sterling	\$1.5809/19		
One ounce of gold	\$382.60/382.75		

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Schumacher stuns rivals

SUZUKA, Japan (AFP) — Newly crowned world champion Michael Schumacher posted a stunning last-second qualifying lap on Friday to take provisional pole position for Sunday's Japanese Grand Prix.

In the final minute of the one-hour session, the pole went successively to Ferrari's Jean Alesi, Damon Hill in the Williams Renault, and then Schumacher.

The double champion threw his Benetton Renault round the 5.8km Suzuka circuit six-tenths of a second faster than Hill. His 1min 38.428sec was set at an average speed of 214.475 kph. Hill timed 1:39.032.

Mika Hakkinen, driving for the first time since an emergency appendix operation two weeks ago, set third quickest time of 1:39.127 in his McLaren Mercedes. "I am absolutely delighted to be in the top three," said Hakkinen. "The operation didn't affect me at all and everything is back to normal."

Schumacher was equally delighted with his provisional pole. "It's something else," he said. "We haven't had this for a long time."

This is the tenth race since Schumacher took pole position in Canada, though he has won six times since then and is on course to equal Nigel Mansell's record of nine wins in a season.

Hill, snappy with the press here following criticism in the British media after his championship defeat at Aida, said he expected more of his car on Saturday.

He said the car was too low on his first run Friday. "It was getting hotter and hotter, and my backside got roasted!" he said.

He paid Schumacher a compliment for his provision-



Michael Schumacher

al pole time. "It is a trade: mark of Michael's that he always manages to pull out something extra, so you just have to go back to your reserves and find something extra yourself."

After Hill's teammate, David Coulthard, set fastest time 24 minutes into the session with 1:40.040, Alesi took

the lead two minutes later with two successive laps, his best being 1:39.460.

He held the place until Schumacher posted 1:39.214 on his first run.

After Coulthard took the pole back, Benetton made a change for the last run. "It worked out perfectly," said Schumacher.

Hill, Coulthard, Alesi and Schumacher all went out four minutes from the end of the session, and the times tumbled by the second.

Alesi set fastest time only to be beaten by Hill, and Hakkinen, with Schumacher setting the seal on the session as time ran out.

Coulthard was pushed down to fifth, but having never driven at Suzuka until the morning practice, he was happy with his performance.

"It is an absolutely fantastic track," he said. "But it was pretty scary when I first went out this morning, because you have to force yourself to learn the track quickly."

"Having got through that," Coulthard said. "I am feeling good out there. I am certain there is more to come tomorrow," he said, aiming for a fifth successive pole position.

Heinz-Harald Frentzen set sixth time in his Sauber-Ford. His teammate Karl Wendlinger, who suffered serious head injuries at Monaco last year, was 17th in his return to racing after being laid off early this season.

Wendlinger said he felt in better shape than earlier this year, and mentally stronger. He had no problems with the physically demanding Suzuka circuit but he said it was difficult to judge his own performance, having had only eight races in two years.

Eddie Irvine in the Jordan Peugeot was seventh at the track where he made his striking Formula One debut two years ago, achieving the rare result of finishing in the points in his first Grand Prix.

Behind him were Gerhard Berger in the second Ferrari and Schumacher's teammate Johnny Herbert, both having their qualifying sessions cut short by crashes.

Irvine's teammate Rubens Barrichello completed the ten fastest of the 24 cars. The tailender was Mark Blundell, who after a morning fraught with technical problem, ran off the track on his first lap in qualifying.

Liger Mugen Honda team chief Tom Walkinshaw later confirmed that Martin Brundle would be returning to partner Olivier Panis in Adelaide. Brundle's last race for the team before he joins Jordan next year.

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GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAWAN HIRSCH
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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q. 1 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ 4 CAKQ7562 CAQ ♠ 63
- The bidding has proceeded:
WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
Pass Pass Pass Pass
What is your opening bid?
- A - You have a good hand offensively, but on defense you might not even take two tricks. Since partner is a passed hand, give up all thoughts of slam and open four hearts.
- Q. 2 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ 4 CAKQ7562 CAQ ♠ 63
- The bidding has proceeded:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♥ Pass 1♠ Pass
What do you bid now?
- A - Do not make a pushy jump to three hearts — partner might think that you need a modicum of heart support to push on to game. With 8 1/2 playing tricks in your own hand and a self-sufficient suit, jump to four hearts.
- Q. 3 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ 7 6 5 4 3 2 CAKQ7562
- The bidding has proceeded:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
Pass Pass 1♥ Pass
2♥ Pass 3♥ Pass
What action do you take?
- A - Don't panic and pass because you think you are a little light for your two-over-one response. You have a good suit, a fit for partner and a ruffing value, and partner has heard your pass. You owe partner another bid and a raise to four diamonds is a sound choice.
- Q. 4 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ 4 3 2 CAKQ7562 CAKQ7562
- Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one spade. What action do you take?
- A - True, you do not have a perfect hand, but it is far safer to act now than to try to balance should the enemy auction die at two spades. Double for takeout.
- Q. 5 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ 4 3 2 CAKQ7562 CAKQ7562
- The bidding has proceeded:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♥ Pass 1♠ Pass
What do you bid now?
- A - Your minimum 4-3-3-3 shape and support in every suit suggest a one-no-trump rebid, and indeed that's the call we would recommend over any other suit response. However, it is too dangerous to suppose good four-card support for partner's major. Raise to two hearts.
- Q. 6 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ 4 3 2 CAKQ7562 CAKQ7562
- The bidding has proceeded:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
Pass Pass 1♥ Pass
2♥ Pass 3♥ Pass
What do you bid now?
- A - At first glance it might seem that three no-trump is automatic. However, with two secondary honors in partner's first-bid suit, a singleton in his second and an ace, a spade contract could easily be your best spot. Bid three spades and await developments.

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World Bank says MENA economic boost rests on reform and private sector

By Cathy King

Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region could restore economic growth, double per capita income and reduce unemployment by the year 2010, provided that close focus is given to indigenous resources and dependence on and efficiency of the private sector are increased, according to a senior World Bank official.

"The region has witnessed a severe slump, a crisis. But the Middle East and North Africa (region) has the opportunity to restore rapid growth and double incomes by the year 2010," MENA region World Bank Vice President Caio Koch-Weser told a press conference on Thursday.

Mr. Koch-Weser said that while the region's economic growth was hindered by a decrease in productivity in the last 10 years and was also adversely affected by falling oil prices, the situation could be reversed if immediate action was taken. At the press conference, Mr. Koch-Weser launched a World Bank report entitled "Claiming the Future: Choosing Prosperity in the Middle East and North Africa."

"The region has very important human, financial and physical resources. It must seize the opportunity and reap the benefits of those resources, otherwise the region runs the risk of being left behind," Mr. Koch-Weser said.

The 118-page report reviews the economic developments over the past two decades of the MENA region, which stretches

from Iran to Morocco.

The report was launched on the eve of the MENA economic summit for it to contribute to debate at the forum.

The report underlines the negative aspects of the last 10 years, which witnessed the decline of the region as the second highest income growth performer to the last.

But Mr. Koch-Weser explained that social indicators pointed to a redeemable situation.

Social indicators include illiteracy, infant mortality and life expectancy. In the next 20 years, he said, life expectancy should increase from 60 years to over 70, while a current average of 40 per cent illiteracy could be halved.

An improvement in these social statistics, along with the promotion of non-oil products and a switch to private-sector dependence, could put the region on the path to restore annual economic growth to between 3.5 per cent and five per cent, he said.

Mr. Koch-Weser also emphasised the report's call for more skilled and flexible workers and the reduction of poverty through accelerating economic growth.

In order to cope with population growth, Mr. Koch-Weser said the report revealed the need to create 47 million jobs by 2010. However, the cost of reforms to ensure necessary economic development and job creation was affordable, he said.

"The cost of reforms will be manageable if shared with the private sector," and if the partnership between the MENA region and the EU's Mediterranean initiative is exploited.

taking Jordan as an example of one country already on the "road of rapid reform." Mr. Koch-Weser reminded the press of the World Bank's announcement last week approving the extension of a \$80 million reform loan to the Kingdom.

"The World Bank has approved the next stage of a \$80 million economic development loan as on-going support for Jordan's reform efforts," he said. "This demonstrates the success of the economic reforms programme and the investor friendly climate here."

The loan agreement will be signed on Sunday, the first day of the MENA summit.

The loan is one of three loans of around \$307 million that the Kingdom will finalise on the fringes of the summit.

Last week Minister of Finance Basel Jaraneh gave a breakdown showing \$135 million credit from the government of Japan in a "retroactive" arrangement with the International Monetary Fund; a \$80 million loan also from the Japanese government co-financed by the \$80 million loan from the World Bank.

The principle author of the World Bank report, Nemat Shafik, said that the report also highlights the required export growth for doubling per capita income.

"It is a major challenge," said Dr. Shafik. "But with flexible firms and employers, increased telecommunication systems and producers, an increase in investments," the desired result would be attainable.

But, Ms. Shafik stressed, governments would need the active population of the private sector.

"Just one per cent increase (in economic growth) would mean eight million less poor people," she said.

Ms. Shafik added that reform costs would benefit more people than those who suffer, but that governments should, in the meantime, provide a "cushion" to absorb the immediate impact of such reforms.



Technicians at work at the press centre of the Middle East and North Africa economic summit (AFP photo)

Onus is on the private sector at Amman economic summit

By Mohammad Hasni
Agence France Presse

AMMAN — The private sector will take centre stage at the Amman economic summit as organisers hope new business partnerships will be forged to boost development in the Middle East and help shore up the peace process.

Around a thousand government representatives from 63 countries at the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) summit, which opens Sunday in Amman.

Organisers have declared the Middle East "open for business" following peace agreements between Israel and the Palestinians and Jordan, and say hundreds of projects will be on display in Amman to tempt potential investors.

Trade leaders have responded in kind, they said. "The response from the business community has been fantastic," said Omayya Touqan, one of the Jordanian organisers of the three-day conference.

He said Amman had had to turn down requests from many more businessmen hoping to attend because there were not enough places for them.

Seventy per cent of private

sector representatives travelling to Amman are from Western and Asian countries," Dr. Touqan said. Fifteen per cent are from oil-rich Gulf Arab states and the remaining 15 per cent from various other countries.

There will be 256 business and finance leaders from Europe alone, including representatives from companies such as the French oil giant Total and the Swiss food group Nestle.

"The Amman conference will be a unique opportunity for the international business community to get involved in the region," Trade and Industry Minister Ali Abul Ragheb said.

Dr. Touqan said the summit comes at a timely moment as Middle East countries are doing their best to liberalise their economies and introduce large-scale privatisation.

"This gives the private sector the opportunity to invest and means it will no longer be limited to carrying out government-financed projects," he said.

Hoping to catch the eye of investors are Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians who will put forward the bulk of the big projects in Amman.

Syria, Lebanon stay home

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanon and Syria are boycotting the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit this weekend, asserting it will help Israel tighten its grip on the Arab World and weaken the chances of a comprehensive peace settlement.

However, in Lebanon, which aligned its Middle East peace policy with Syria's, the decision has exasperated business leaders and economists who regarded the forum as a chance for both countries to attract investment.

Privately, they have expressed fears that Lebanon's absence at the landmark summit in Amman will endanger its post-war reconstruction efforts and undermine its future role in the region.

But there is little they can do in the face of official hostility to the summit, which will attract some 1,500 politicians and business leaders from 63 countries, including Arab states, Israel, the Un-

(Continued on page 7)

Mideast is ready with major projects

By Greg Myre
The Associated Press

AMMAN — The Palestinians will be seeking billions of dollars to finance water projects. The Israelis want an airport on the edge of the Red Sea. Egypt is to propose a regional rail and highway network.

The Middle East is one of the world's least developed regions, but that has not kept governments from drawing up hugely ambitious — and expensive — projects that will be unveiled at an economic summit that opens Sunday in Amman.

In a region where foreign investment is limited, Mideast states see the conference as a rare opportunity to speak directly to scores of Western businessmen who will be among the 2,000 participants from more than 60 countries.

However, the pricey proposals will far exceed the amount of money available to finance them.

"It's unlikely that businessmen will come with their chequebooks," said Khalid Masri, senior manager for international investment at Arab Jordan Investment Bank.

And while some Mideast countries have begun to liberalise their economies, many investors remain wary of a region that's still known for political uncertainty, excessive red tape and widespread corruption.

Unless governments in the Middle East speed up the pace of economic reform, "this region runs the risk of being left behind," Caio Koch-Weser, vice president of the World Bank's Middle East-North Africa region, told a news conference Thursday.

The Amman conference is a follow-up to a similar gathering in Casablanca, Morocco, a year ago. Organisers say there will be less political rhetoric at this year's conference and more face-to-face business activities, although they caution that this will not necessarily result in signed contracts.

All is made possible by the Middle East peace process, which since 1993 has been Israel sign peace agreements with the Palestinians and Jordan.

Jordan, the host country, plans the propose 27 projects costing an estimated \$3.5 billion. The private sector has its own list of 136 proposals with an estimated price tag \$1.2 billion.

Perhaps the most ambitious plan calls for linking the electric power grids of Egypt, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinians.

Egypt is sending six government ministers who will have a detailed proposal to connect regional rail and highway networks. The Palestinians have focused on their water needs, the proposals that would run into the billions of dollars.

Israel appears to have the biggest wish list of all.

A government publication put together for the conference is hundreds of pages long and lists 218 separate proposals, ranging from fibre-optic telecommunications systems to preventing desertification. Estimated cost: \$24.7 billion.

Italy's old guard sentenced

MILAN (R) — A Milan court on Friday sentenced two former prime ministers, Bettino Craxi and Arnaldo Forlani, and the leader of the Northern League to jail terms on corruption charges, judicial sources said.

The so-called Enimont trial, which began 16 months ago, put Italy's old political elite and their business associates in the dock. The 22 defendants, all found guilty, included the heads of Italy's old ruling parties and league leader Umberto Bossi.

Other big names convicted included former Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis and former Justice Minister Claudio Martelli.

COLUMN

Housewives call for pay at world congress

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Housewives began their first world congress Thursday with demands for more respect and laws granting them a cut of their husbands' paychecks. After standing at attention as an Argentine Air Force band played the anthems of all 12 countries represented, delegates heard an impassioned defence of housewifery in a world they say often values working women more highly. "A housewife's role is a role of transmission of life, of culture and values. It is a human role to bring up one's own children, educate them, help the old and look after the welfare of all," said Tina Leonzi, president of the recently formed Inter Continental Union of Housewives. More than 150 members of mainly conservative housewife groups from Latin America and Europe joined in for the meeting, which the Argentine hosts hope will start a campaign to recognise house management as a profession.

Bill gives Hillary a whistle for 48th birthday

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton gave first lady Hillary Clinton a whistle for her 48th birthday Thursday, no ordinary blower but one shaped like a woman, holding the world above her head. At a small birthday party in the White House Rose Garden, the president explained what had inspired this gift, the president explained what had inspired this gift, suitable for wearing around the neck. The design reminded him of his wife, "because she is always doing something for women around the world," said the first lady's spokesman, Neil Lattimore. Mr. Lattimore said Hillary Clinton had received three other gifts from her husband: of an undisclosed nature, as well as three birthday cards. Mr. Clinton only showed the gathering two of the cards, but reddened when his wife mentioned the existence of a third. "I guess I will have to save it for my memoirs," she said. The first lady then left for New York, where she was to visit a breast cancer research centre. The first couple spent the afternoon together. "We gave the president of the United States the afternoon off so he could enjoy Mrs. Clinton's birthday," said White House spokesman Michael McCurry. Bill Clinton turned 49 in August.

Saldivar gets life in prison for Selena murder

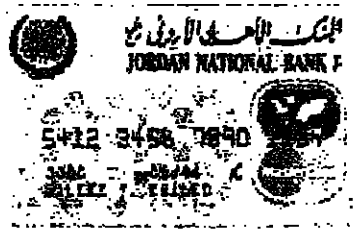
HOUSTON (R) — A jury sentenced Yolanda Saldivar to life in prison Thursday for the murder of Tejano singing star Selena. It was the maximum possible punishment under Texas law and meant that she would spend at least 30 years behind bars before being eligible for parole. A stunned Saldivar hung her head and wept quietly when Judge Mike Westergren read the sentence. She shook her head "no" when he asked if she had anything to say. Ms. Saldivar's elderly parents, who had pleaded with the jury to show leniency, cried out and sobbed loudly in the quiet courtroom. Ms. Saldivar, 35, the founder of the singer's fan club and manager of her clothing boutiques, fatally shot Selena Quintanilla Perez on March 31 in a Corpus Christi, Texas motel. Prosecutors charged that she gunned the Grammy Award-winning singer down after Selena fired her for allegedly embezzling from the boutiques.

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U.S., Russia struggle to agree on Bosnia

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — The United States and Russia struggled to bridge their differences over a Bosnia peace force as a planned Moscow meeting of Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian leaders on the eve of Bosnia peace talks was postponed.

The Russian government said on Friday the Oct. 31 meeting would not now take place because of President Boris Yeltsin's illness. Officials said another date would be set for the meeting, but gave no details.

Mr. Yeltsin's spokesman was quoted as saying on Friday that the Russian leader, rushed to hospital on Thursday after a heart attack, would be under close medical supervision until the end of November (see inside).

Postponement of the Moscow meeting was not thought likely to affect the start of U.S.-sponsored peace talks between leaders of Bosnia's warring parties in Dayton, Ohio on Nov. 1.

The meeting was always seen primarily as an attempt to assuage Russia's concerns that it was being sidelined by its former cold war adversary in the quest for an overall settlement in ex-Yugoslavia.

Of more concern was continuing disagreement between Washington and Moscow over the make-up of a multinational peace force for Bosnia, a key element of a complex package of proposals aimed at bringing peace to the region after four years of conflict.

U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry met his Russian counterpart Pavel Grachev on Thursday to try

to overcome Russian objections to its troops serving under North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) command, and said they had partially closed a "distinct gap" in their positions.

"At this meeting each side clearly and unambiguously defined its position as to how Russia could participate in the peace implementation process in Bosnia," Mr. Perry said.

"There was a distinct gap between the two positions on how to achieve that goal. We've had a good businesslike discussion for the past three hours and succeeded in closing that gap some, but it's still not completely closed."

Mr. Perry declined to answer when asked if Russian troops might serve in a civil role such as engineering and road-building instead of taking part in enforcement of a peacekeeping agreement.

Mr. Grachev said during a photo opportunity at the start of the meeting he was confident a settlement could be reached.

"I am sure we will find understanding in the end," the burly Russian general said.

In Bosnia itself, four trucks driven by civilians drove unimpeded past Serb army checkpoints and into Sarajevo on Friday — the first to travel along a Serb-held highway west of the capital since war began 42 months ago.

The U.N.-escorted convoys are part of a U.N. effort to ensure that the 15-day-old ceasefire pact is respected.

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